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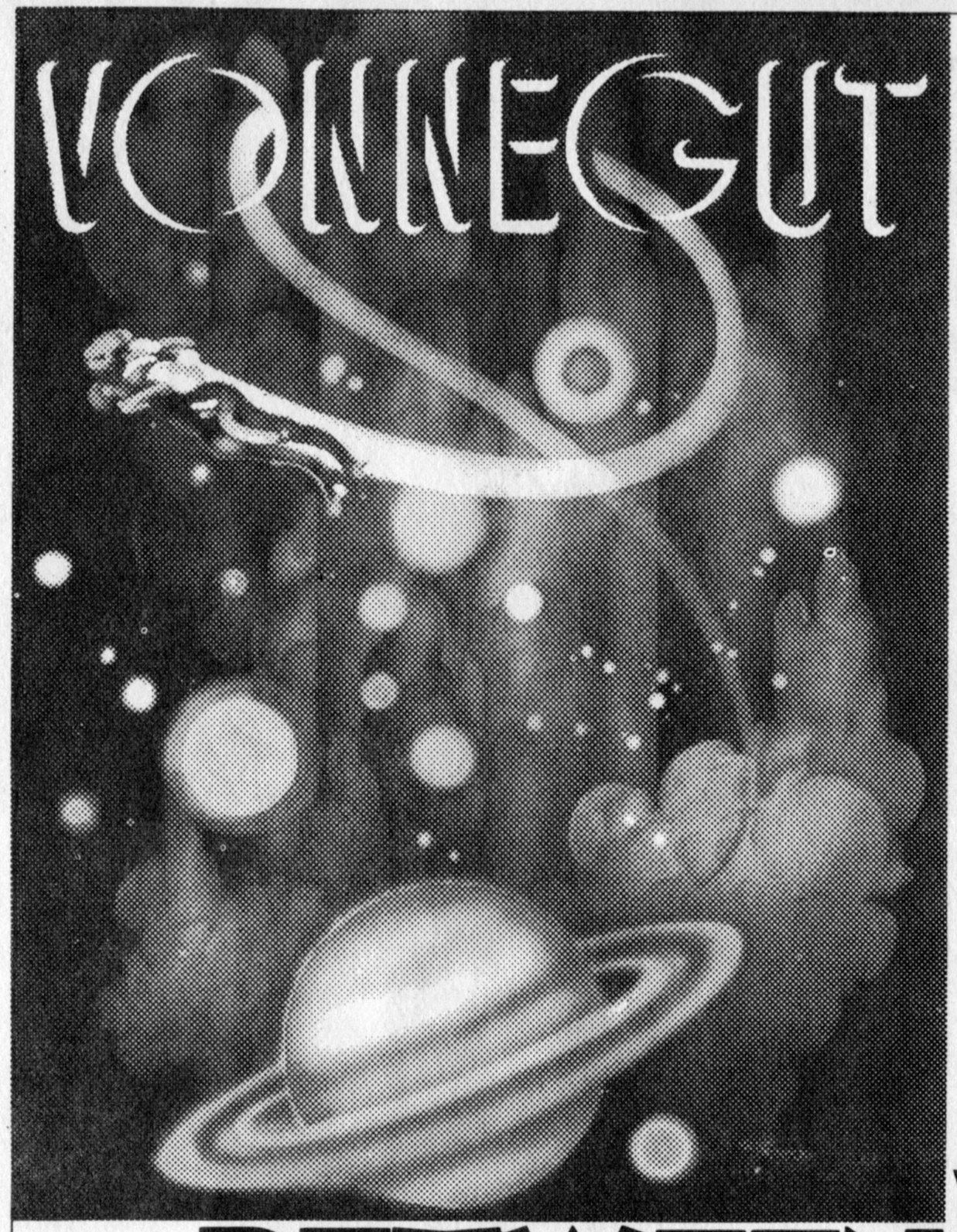
Inside:
Leone talks

TAKE ONE

Christopher Lee
in "Horror of Dracula"

The Horrible Hammer Films of Terence Fisher



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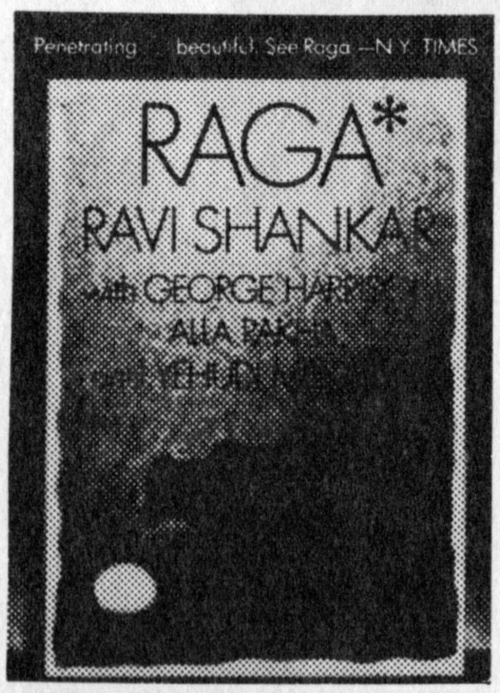

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FEEDBACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

Unenthusiastic: Griffith

In Vol. 3 No. 7 you point out that you need locations where the public may procure *Take One*. I don't really think it is the location of the magazine but the content that you should consider of primary importance. By the outstanding list of correspondents published in each edition and by the letters from all over the world — which appear to be simple cheap acknowledgement of your efforts from the four corners — it is duly recognized that your magazine is well received.

My present complaint is your article on D. W. Griffith dealing with three obscure films made by this great man. I agree with cinematic historians that D. W. Griffith is and always will be the father of the motion picture. It was he who nurtured it and developed it to what it is now. However, with all due respect to Mr. Dorr, you do not do much justice to this man in associating him with, what seems to be from the article, three bombs! Not only because they were bombs but also because **Birth of a Nation** and **Intolerance** — along with many pictures with Lillian Gish — are as synonymous with the magnitude of Griffith as the Little Tramp is with Chaplin. I personally was bored after the first page of the article, for it was proving nothing to me about Griffith except he was human in making three mistakes!

Articles should be produced on current filmmakers or on the greats of the past

FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS

The 1973 **International Film & TV Festival of New York** is to be held at the Americana Hotel November 14 through 16. This festival is open to all phases of film production (including filmstrips, commercials, promotional films, featurettes) and the deadline for entries is September 15. Write the Festival at: 251 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Films Inc. is sponsoring a **script-writing contest** open to any student in grades 1 to 6 as of the beginning of this year. The winner will get $500 and Films Inc. will then make a film based on the script. Deadline is August 7. For further details, write: Films Inc., Dept. About, 1144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

Boston University and George Eastman House are co-sponsoring a symposium entitled **The Coming of Sound to the American Film, 1925-1940** which is to take place at George Eastman House (Rochester, N.Y.) October 19 through 22. Among invited guests will be Raymond Fielding, Gerald Noxon and Richard Schickel. More info from: Peter Feinstein, Executive Secretary, University Film Study Center, Box 275, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

The second **Tehran International Film Festival** has been scheduled for November 26 through December 6 of this year. There will be retrospective screenings, a film market, and an international competition for features and shorts. Entry forms and regulations from: The Ministry of Culture and Arts, Tehran, Iran.

The fifth **Canadian Student Film Festival** will be held at Sir George Williams University September 26 through 30, and there will be some $10,000 in prize money and awards. Only Canadian-produced films are eligible (they may be 16mm, 35mm, or Super-8) and they may not have been entered in any other festival during 1973. Deadline for submissions is August 26. Details: Conservatory of Cinematographic Art, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal 107.

All amateur and independent filmmakers are invited to submit their works for the sixth annual **Brooklyn Film Festival** (16mm films up to 20 minutes in length are eligible). Deadline is June 1st. At the same time, The Brooklyn Arts and Culture Ass'n. is sponsoring a special 8mm Mini-Festival. Entrance fees are $8 for the 16mm competition, $5 for the 8mm one. Write: BACA, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11238.

The 9th International **Animated Film Festival** will take place at Annecy, in France, from June 13 through 17. Anyone who wants to submit a film to the Selection Committee should contact: 21, rue de la Tour d'Auvergne, 75009, Paris.

The Oberhausen 1973 **Sports Film Festival** (with about $10,000 in prizes) is to be held October 22 through 26. Any 16mm or 35mm film about any aspect of sports, produced since Jan. 1st 1969, may be entered for consideration by the jury (which has Claude Lelouch as its chairman). Deadline is October 1st. Entry forms from: Sportfilmtage '73 Oberhausen, 42 Oberhausen 1, Schwartzstrasse 71, West Germany.

The **Greater Phoenix Summer Festival** is accepting Super-8 or 16mm films (deadline, June 1st) in each of three categories — documentary, animation, and fiction — on the theme, "America Through the Creative Eye of the Cinematographer". There's an entry fee of $5. For further information, contact: Robert L. Bluemle, Greater Phoenix Summer Festival, 6330 North Seventh Street, Phoenix, Ariz. 85014.

The fifth international **Festival of Student-Made Films** is to take place in Amsterdam November 15 through 24th. The films may be in 35mm or 16mm and must have been produced — by a student — since the beginning of 1970. Deadline for completed entry forms is July 1st, and they are available from: CINESTUD, Roetersstraat 34, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The second international **Philadelphia Black Film Festival** is to held by the University of Pennsylvania this summer. Any 16mm film relating to the Black experience may be submitted. For further info: Oliver Franklin, Festival Secretary, Office of External Affairs, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. 19173.

Deadline for entries in the Information Film Producers of America **"Cindy" Awards** (Oct. 31-Nov. 3) is July 1st. More information: Film Competition Chairman, IFPA, Box 1470, Hollywood, Ca. 90028.

Deadline for entries in the sixth annual **Atlanta International Film Festival** (Sept. 7-15) is May 31. Info: J. Hunter Todd, P.O. Drawer 13258, Atlanta, Ga. 30324.

Deadline for entries in the **Industrial Film Awards** (films produced in-plant) is July 2. Write: Industrial Photography, 750 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Women and Film will be held in Toronto June 8 through 17. The programme is to include current and retrospective international films, seminars, workshops, and exhibits (plus films for children as part of the free day-care facilities). Criteria for material submitted is that the major contribution to the film was made by a woman. For further information: 9A Charles Street West, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1R4 (416-964-9562).

June 1st through 10th sees the **First International Film Festival on the Human Environment** take place in Montreal. More information can be had by contacting the Festival, care of: National Film Board of Canada, P.O. Box 6100, Montreal 101, Quebec.

The Toronto Film-makers Co-op has announced the start of production of a series of **low-budget feature films** and is seeking suitable scripts written by Canadian citizens or residents. Write the Co-op at: Room 201, 341 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1W8.

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but in such a way that the readers can associate with them. If you did an article on Frank Capra, are you going to talk about **Forbidden**; on Disney will you talk about his Oswald the Rabbit?

Despite my admiration for Griffith's innovations and complete domination of screen technique, I am tiring of his name cropping up every six months or so in some periodical or "new" film history book. How much more can be said of importance concerning a man who has been dead for over 20 years and who has been inactive in movies for almost a half-century? The exploitation of his name is becoming a monotonous gimmick for film writers. There are a great many contemporary directors who will become names as classic on the screen as Griffith; why not give *them* some space?

David Lean is my favourite director but I have fewer than 100 pages of research done by professionals on him. His **Doctor Zhivago** is the film of all films, and I can say after viewing it nine times that it is flawless! Griffith has been called the Dickens of the cinema due to his cutting from one action to another, but I tend to think Lean fits this pattern more accurately. Lean is the intellectual filmmaker but not in the ludicrous class of Stanley Kubrick.

You *should* do an article on Lean. You people who have the writing facilities and financing are in a position to do this; instead you fill the magazine with either superfluous or insipid material.

In conclusion, you may be interested to know that **Battle of the Sexes** alone is mentioned in the *Dictionnaire universel du cinéma*, one of the finest, most compact and yet comprehensive reference works I've ever seen. Neither **Drums of Love** nor **Lady of the Pavements** is given any acknowledgement.

Michael J. Martin
Toronto, Ontario

In his review [Vol. 3 No. 7] of *D.W. Griffith: His Life and Work*, John H. Dorr — quite rightly — criticizes the author for declaring lost certain Griffith features, which are in fact preserved at the Museum of Modern Art. Then, Dorr in his article "Griffith in Hollywood" does exactly the same thing, when he claims that no prints are known to exist of **Topsy and Eva**. The film is far from lost, and has been circulating on 16mm for many years. It is a really charming racist comedy, with a delightful performance by Rosetta Duncan as Topsy.

Anthony Slide
Washington. D.C.

Unenthusiastic: Bill Fruet

I do not agree with your enthusiasm for **Wedding in White**. It is an unnecessary film, depressing and ugly — with the exception of the acting roles it is a vehicle for. Consider its content: dishonourable actions all down the line, khaki uniforms as the prime image, and insensitive drunken chauvinism monopolising the script. The film is unpleasant, slow, and full of lies. Is this piece of historic disgrace the best that the CFDC can finance, is this the best of English Canada, is this how it will be seen abroad? What cop-out has Bill Fruet made to get backing? Think of the beauties, the wonder, the happiness of life and ask why a man with $100,000 takes the trouble to record this buggering of humanity? When we make so few films, and when the culture of today is so precariously balanced, taxpayers who supported this film can be justifiably disgusted at the throwaway bore that's as much a discredit to our vision as the grossness it reflects.

Antony Lorraine
Vancouver, B.C.

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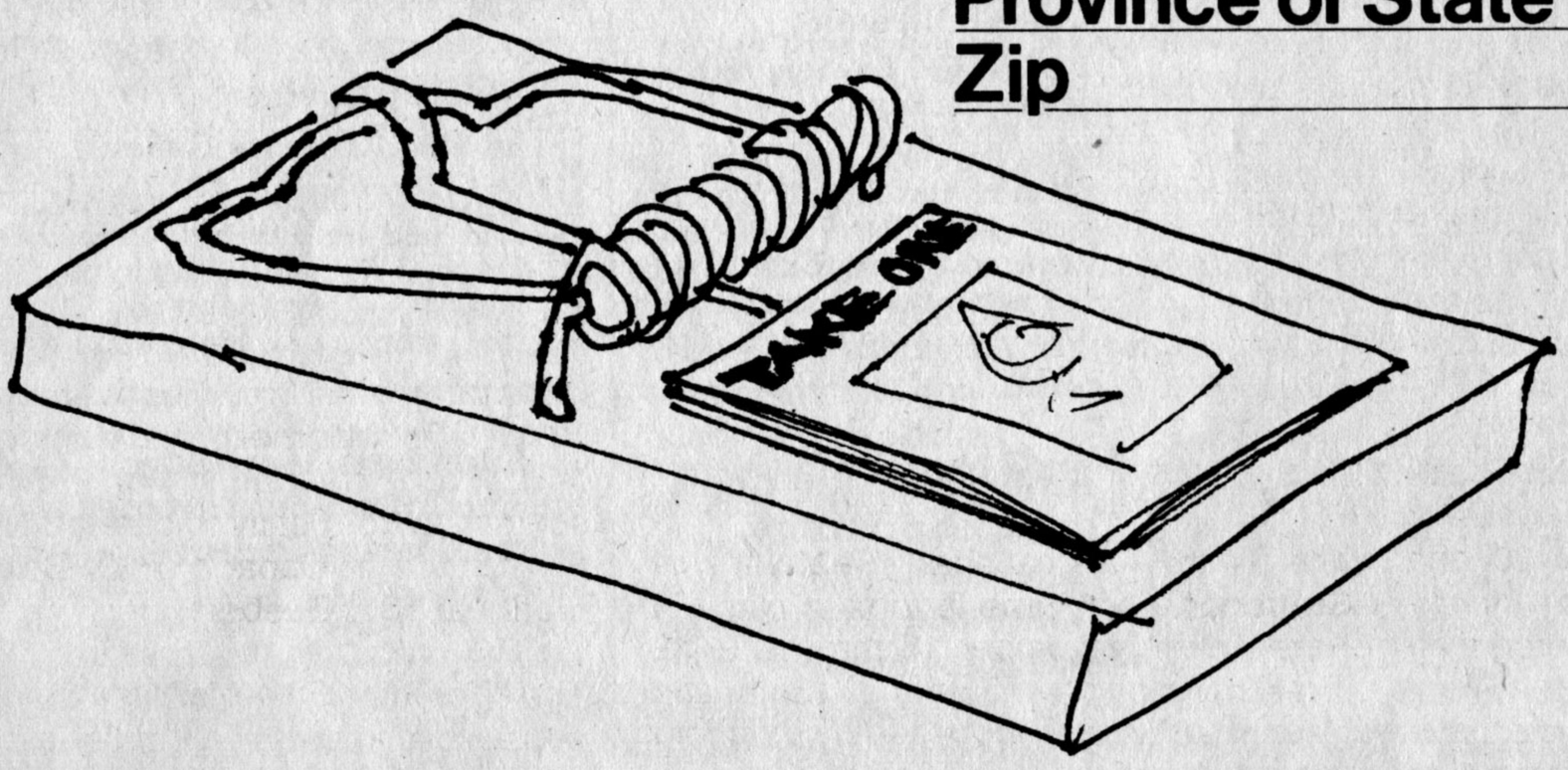

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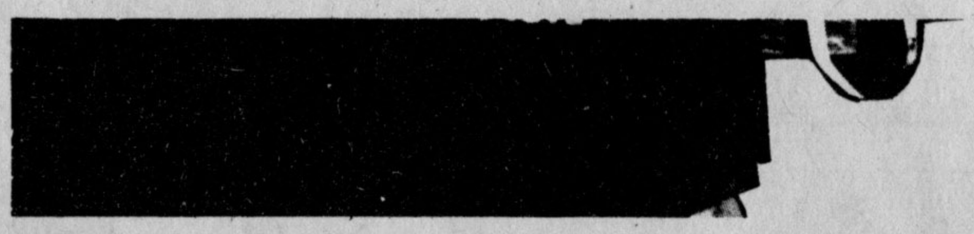

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TAKE ONE

The News Page

The truth 24 times per second.

Wondering why the usual membership-nominated Special Visual Effects Award was missing from this year's Academy presentations, replaced instead by a Board-of-Governors-awarded Special Award to **The Poseidon Adventure**? One story is that the Board was worried that the X-rated **Flesh Gordon** (a live-animation feature made by skin-flick specialists Graffitti Productions) would walk off with the Oscar if the nominations were left open as usual. The company — earlier associated with **Mona, Hollywood Blue** and **Harlot** — claims the category was closed when it became clear that **Flesh Gordon** might win.

Films Inc. has announced a new concept in campus film distribution. Beginning in May, they will have over 100 films (The Showcase Collection) — from Fellini's **The Clowns** to **Planet of the Apes** — available with complete publicity materials, including posters, ad designs, and coming-attraction preview trailers. Also included are several important American features never before available in 16mm. For a copy of The Showcase Collection catalog (and/or free posters for **Catch-22, The French Connection**, and **The Clowns**) write Seth Willenson, Films Inc., 1144 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

Anybody who got so excited over the jazzy sunglasses Elvis wore in his **Elvis Presley on Tour** feature that they'd like their own will probably want to know that Beverly Hills' Optique Boutique made them (solid gold frames, lightning bolts, and all) to Presley's special order: eight pair for $2400.

The American Film Institute's theatre in Washington's Kennedy Center was to have been inaugurated with a three-week series of screenings which "ranged over the 78 year history of cinema". Included was Costa-Gavras' latest film, **State of Siege**. The event received international publicity when George Stevens Jr. (following in the footsteps of his father who, while on the jury of the Berlin Film Festival a few years back, made a stink about the inclusion of **O.K.** — a German film about Vietnam) cancelled the screening of the Costa-Gavras film. In the resultant brouhaha, a number of other films scheduled for screening in Washington were withdrawn by their producers or distributors. AFI's board chairman then suggested that **State of Siege** could be included in a special series of controversial political films — to include such hot pictures (politically) as **Birth of a Nation** (pro-KKK), **Ten Days That Shook the World** (pro-Russian Revolution), and **Triumph of the Will** (pro-Nazi). Unfortunately overlooked in all the excitement were a number of truly important filmic events, particularly the screening of Abel Gance's **Napoleon**, "the premiere performance of a 5½-hour silent version for three screens, newly reconstructed by Kevin Brownlow from pieces sent by archives from all over the world".

After Marlon Brando had landed his role in **The Godfather**, he turned to his old-time acting teacher Lee Strasberg for advice on how to create the character of the Mafia don. Strasberg, in his New York Actors Studio, lays heavy emphasis on having his students imagine themselves as various kinds of objects and animals. He simply told Brando to play the part as a bear. Remember that next time you see the film.

If you're watching the tube and a Blatz Beer commercial comes on — set in a bar where old movies are being shown to a crowd of long-haired beer drinkers — check out the photography: It's by **Haskell Wexler**. Wexler also recently directed a series of Coke commercials, including one which was disrupted by a group of Maoists (the last shot is from a helicopter as it pulls back from a group of people on a hill; the shot ends — rather awkwardly — on a freeze, because at that point people began throwing things at the copter).

Our Financial Section: Steve McQueen is to be paid $1,000,000 for a series of Honda motorcycle ads to be shown in Japan. And he is reported to have been paid another $1,000,000 "up front" for having made **Papillon** (from which he'll eventually get another $1,000,000 as his percentage of the profits). But then, the **Papillon** $1,000,000 went straight (according to our sources) into the bank account, not of Steve, but of Neile McQueen, as part of her divorce settlement. McQueen was joined, at the **Papillon** location, by Ali MacGraw. Miss MacGraw, it is understood, may be giving back to Paramount exec Bob Evans — as part of *their* divorce settlement — the percentage piece he'd given her of **Love Story**. See, it all evens out in the end .... The U.S. government is hitting Elizabeth Taylor for some $350,000 in back income taxes. They claim she retained her American citizenship until 1966, while she maintains she gave it up in 1964. Miss Taylor also, recently, received a letter from a senior Arab government leader offering to lift the ban on her movies in Arab countries if she first proved her neutrality by donating $1,300,000 to the Arab and Palestinian refugees — balancing the sum she is alleged to have donated to Israeli causes.

Production notes from all over: Now Marlon Brando is screenwriter Robert Bolt's first choice for the title role in the Levine-Attenborough production of **Gandhi** .... Richard Lester (**Petulia, Help!, How I Won the War**) is finally making another movie (his last feature, **The Bed Sitting Room**, was never released theatrically in North America, but is available in 16mm): **The Three Musketeers**, starring Oliver Reed and Michael York (with Charlton Heston in a cameo role as Cardinal Richelieu) .... Anthony Quinn is set to direct (and star in) his own production of Hemingway's **Across the River and Into the Trees**, scheduled to start shooting around Venice soon .... Stanley Donen is filming Antoine de Saint-Exupery's fairy-tale, **The Little Prince**, as a musical. Lerner and Loewe have written the script and music, and Richard Kiley, Gene Wilder and Bob Fosse star .... Franco Zeffirelli is to start directing the summer sequences of his next feature, **Camille**, in Paris during July and August. He's still auditioning like mad .... Liv Ullman has Marcello Mastroianni as her leading man in **The Abdication**, now that she's completed work on **Taylor's Bride** (in which she appears opposite Gene Hackman). But Dino de Laurentiis is already making plans for his version of Flaubert's **Madame Bovary**, in which Miss Ullmann plays the title role. De Laurentiis is hoping to sign Peter Finch as her doctor-husband and Alain Delon as her lover .... Ingmar Bergman has been meeting with Barbra Streisand lately in Stockholm to discuss a movie production of Franz Lehar's 1907 operetta, **The Merry Widow**. Miss Streisand, meanwhile, has also had discussions with Ray Stark about a sequel to his **Funny Girl**, to be called **A Very Funny Lady**, in which Barbra will continue her award-winning Fanny Brice role .... Twiggy has been signed to make her US movie debut in a Bing Crosby Productions feature, **W** .... Michael Caine will star in the Don Siegel film, **Drabble**, based on the novel *Seven Days to a Killing*. Siegel will produce as well as direct and the film is to be shot in Britain and France starting mid-July .... United Artists has signed Robert Altman to two more film projects, following on **The Long Goodbye**. The first film is to be **Thieves Like Us** (about Mississippi bank robbers in the late '30s), the second is entitled **The Great Southern Amusement Company** .... UA will also be releasing **Sleeper**, Woody Allen's next feature (which he wrote, directed and stars in), about a man brought to life after having been frozen for a hundred years .... Norman Jewison's next film (after **Billy Two Hats**) is to be on the life on the British general Orde Wingate .... Francis Ford Coppola has announced that **Godfather II** (sequel to guess-what) will be three hours long. It is set to roll this July and the two features will then be released as a six-hour movie .... Alain Resnais, who hasn't made a film in five years, is reportedly preparing one to be shot this year. The picture, to star Jean-Paul Belmondo, is about an economic scandal of 1929 which almost led to the fall of the Republic .... Joseph Losey has cast Susan Clark as the first lead in his production of Marcel Proust's **Remembrance of Things Past**, set to roll in France this summer .... Al Ruddy is to produce, and Ralph Bakshi will write and direct, **Coon Skin**, described as "the first full-length Black animated feature." (Bakshi wrote and directed **Fritz the Cat**.) ... And Derio Productions has announced plans to film **Pussy Whipped**, "the first totally explicit motion picture made by women." The screenplay is by Cheri Caffaro and Ann Laurence, and a search is currently underway for skilled female technical personnel.

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The Horrible Hammer Films of Terence Fisher

by
Harry Ringel

The Universal Pictures horror hero: a scientist here, an artist there, even a common man or two. Each sets out in search of terrible truths, the secrets of which only a glance over the lip of the pit of hell can reveal. They never survive with their knowledge intact, these Ahabs; hell grows hotter the closer one comes to it, and the smoke can blind the eyes. Furthermore, they are not supposed to survive. Unspoken rules dictate the inevitability of their failure.

Back home, the Universal horror heroine keeps the ashtrays clean, her skirts pressed, and waits. And waits. Few are rewarded; most consider themselves fortunate if they are around to pick up the pieces after the fall.

Fall the main character does, in the great Universal monster myths: Baron Frankenstein quite literally, from the hands of his creature to the arms of his beloved; the phantom of the opera, from the God-like safety of his solitude, to destruction through, and for, love; the mummy, rejected by various reincarnations of his ancient love, into assorted lonely deaths. None return home with the goods; and home, the Universal ethic reminds us, is where the heart is.

Or is it? Hammer Films have made their fortune by modifying, and occasionally contradicting outright, Universal's bad-boy-come-home-to-his-mother tradition. Hammer allows its hero to work hard *and* produce results, despite the fact that his love won't wait. Who would expect her to, modern values ask. Only the foolishly romantic, Hammer replies, echoing current moral shifts; and the foolishly romantic don't go to today's movies. Little Edens continue to disappear all around us. The days of **Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein** as the quintessential kiddie matinee were numbered. Today, theatres rent Hammer or virtually nothing at all. Take it or leave it: through Hammer, the horror film has grown up, kept up, and (once again) flourished.

The jingle of loose change in Hammer's well-stuffed pockets has always assured their not being taken too seriously. Yet that same jingle has not faded entirely from Universal's own far-off pockets, despite the fact that time has allowed the art of James Whale and Tod Browning to be recognised. Is it too soon for the likes of Terence Fisher? Fisher has dealt with most all of the classic film monsters: Frankenstein, Dracula, the wolf man, the mummy, the phantom of the opera, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. His work exhibits enough sound stylistic and thematic consistencies to please both auteurists and collaborationists alike. Even today, Hammer continues to grind Fisher's original innovations to a reusable pulp. Reverse a theme here, reapply one there: Terence Fisher's renovations of once durable myths have placed a mirror to Universal, creating a hall-of-mirrors world whose endless reflections have breathed life into a dying genre.

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THE PLEASURE OF BUSINESS

The point of departure for Fisher and Hammer films as marketable commodities was common: before **The Curse of Frankenstein** (1957), Hammer had remained solvent by distributing second-rate American products in England, as well as producing a few features of their own. Fisher's early Gainsborough programmers, though graced with a few name stars, were indifferently received; his first Hammer efforts, which included a pair of minor science fiction films, fared little better.

The spark for **The Curse of Frankenstein** was admittedly derivative. James Carreras, co-founder with Anthony Hinds of Hammer productions, summed up the inspiration for redoing the Universal classic in characteristically pragmatic terms: "We . . . realised that nobody had made a classic horror film — by which I mean the Draculas and the Frankensteins — for many, many years. So virtually we started from there" (quoted in Colin Heard's "Hammering the Box Office," *Films and Filming*, 1969).

"There," of course, refers to the end of the Universal Frankenstein film cycle, with the **Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein** satire, in 1948. For a decade, the horror film had completely abandoned the Frankenstein concept — the longest period of time the monster has been absent from the screen. Assigned to the film by Hinds, Fisher was initially given four weeks to complete it. He held out for five; during that time, through some alchemical combination of wit, brains, and a snowballing sense of fascination with a project which had initially been, according to Fisher, "a bit of a giggle" (quoted in "Horror is My Business," *Films & Filming*), the Hammer myth was born.

Mary Shelley's modern Prometheus brought the fire of life to his own man, and died haunted by his achievement. James Whale's version, though it lets its protagonist off the hook, agrees: the proper study of mankind is man, not the creation of same.

Today, Fisher understands, the world co-operates more readily with its mad scientists: " . . .those blighters they're sending up in rockets and space capsules — they're the modern Frankensteins" (quoted in "Horror is My Business"). His ultramodern Prometheus carries the spark of life around in a briefcase — allowing his audience to eavesdrop, through 20th century eyes, upon the still-lingering indolence of the Victorian soul. Fisher's mannered period pieces, by counterpointing the urgencies of the current age, gain a strength unavailable to the Universal films, which were not quite so divorced from their subject. Fisher's Frankenstein would do fine now; then, he had to build not a home, but a fortress, out of reason, if he expected to enjoy the challenge of his work — much less play golf on the moon.

Nothing much happens during the first half of **The Curse of Frankenstein:** no monster, no onscreen grave-robbings, only one bloodless murder. Instead, Jimmy Sangster's script flashes back from Frankenstein's death cell to the young Baron receiving his new tutor, flirting with him through intellectual debate, and soon surpassing his teacher in knowledge. From this point until the first appearnace of the monster, **The Curse of Frankenstein** settles into a pitched battle between Frankenstein's ardent preparations and his tutor's objections to his blasphemous deeds. Spoon-fed to the audience for over an hour, this cerebral conflict between a willful mind and its unheeded conscience hardly employed the one-shock-a-reel formula which most horror films had come to depend on. How did these newcomers expect to keep their viewer in his seat?

With ritual, perhaps: for in place of action, Sangster's script builds a queasy anticipation in its audience, despite the familiarity of the story-line. The exuberance with which Frankenstein goes about his ghoulish business become the only possible focal point in an otherwise stifling world of creeping quilts and self-serving impulses. Severed limbs, scattered impersonally across Fisher's deceptively baroque compositions, underscore the bleak moral landscape through which the freshness of Frankenstein's quest cuts like the light of creation itself. But the world will not have a Frankenstein who enjoys playing God, much less one who succeeds. Strong on dialogue and characterisation, **The Curse of Frankenstein** becomes a monster film only because it has to: the creature, when it finally does appear, wreaks only enough havoc to serve as a walking "I told you so."

Like Whale, Fisher concerns himself with the imbalances bred by an individual's total absorption in his work. But where Whale, at best, commiserates, Fisher empathises. Unlike Colin Clive's harried researcher in the Whale version, Peter Cushing draws from Frankenstein the characteristic pride and supercilious contempt of a man whose solitudinous pursuits breed capability, not perversion. Intellectual failure becomes an axiom in the studio-affected sensibility of James Whale. In his **Frankenstein**, disaster is seeded from the start; whereas in the Fisher version, there exists the ghost of a chance that he will succeed.

Succeed he does, in Hammer's hurried, but far from hasty, sequel. No so much maligned as ignored when it first came out, **The Revenge of Frankenstein** (1958) has become, rightly, a cause célèbre among those who would seek to legitimize Hammer films in general, and Fisher films in particular, as something more than mere entertainments. Sangster's script bristles with religious analogies. Frankenstein, like the Old Testament God, presides actively over a world in which his intellectual underlings submit only too readily to the dictates of their impulses. His "first man" — an intelligent, sensitive cripple whose brain is successfully placed into a lithe new body — commits the Original Sin of seeking out worldly knowledge, injures his healing brain in the process, and becomes again misshapen. Furthermore, he escapes with the aid of a beautiful nurse, who responds to his pleas for freedom with the same brand of misplaced compassion which had caused the **The Curse of Frankenstein** experiment to fail: hard luck indeed, for a man who has come so close, in only his second try, to playing God.

Cushing brings to his Frankenstein-as-God extension of the **The Curse of Frankenstein** character a disarming vigour which indicates that he might not do a bad job of running the universe after all, if only people would cooperate; and Fisher sympathizes not because of the impossibilities inherent within Frankenstein's task, but for the difficulties which purely human obstacles impose. Who can Frankenstein trust? Not his friends, not his teachers, certainly not women, and not even the gratitude of his healing patient. At the film's end, Dr. Frank — the old brain in a new body, after a mob has almost killed him — has learned that if he is to reign as God in man's world, he must do so alone.

The protagonist of the first two Hammer Frankenstein films, then, differs vitally from his Universal counterpart. The British Baron obviously takes great pleasure in his work; while Clive acts confused, apologetic, and finally (in **Bride of Frankenstein**) downright petulant vis à vis the morality of what he is attempting to achieve. Furthermore, accident alone bars the success of Cushing's near-miss experiments; whereas deep religio-philosophical roots foredoom Clive's gropings in a dark which is "best left unknown." Finally, when the 1931 **Frankenstein** ends, one feels that the Baron is indeed fortunate to have survived his bout with Knowledge, and to be able to return to a wedding ceremony which human decency dictates as correct for him. **The Curse of Frankenstein** and **The Revenge of Frankenstein** respect no such moral code; in fact, all of Fisher's men of science must fight furiously to hurdle the varied obstacles which others — women in particular — put in their path. None succeed; for in each film, each in her own way, the Fisher heroine knows how to fight back.

THE BUSINESS OF PLEASURE

Fight back they must: for in Fisher's misogynous universe, his hero must succeed despite the woman behind him. With Hammer colour, Hammer negligées, and Hammer silicone supporting them, the Hammer heroine has been defined primarily through the packaging of her figure; and like the most time-honored sex objects, these corsetted Playmates function most effectively by serving as so much dead weight. Tradition has also allowed Fisher to cut their images from the classic Romantic mold, which divides Woman into two extremes: the sacred and the profane. By injecting a marked facetiousness into the one, while allowing the other's profanity to speak for itself, he deals

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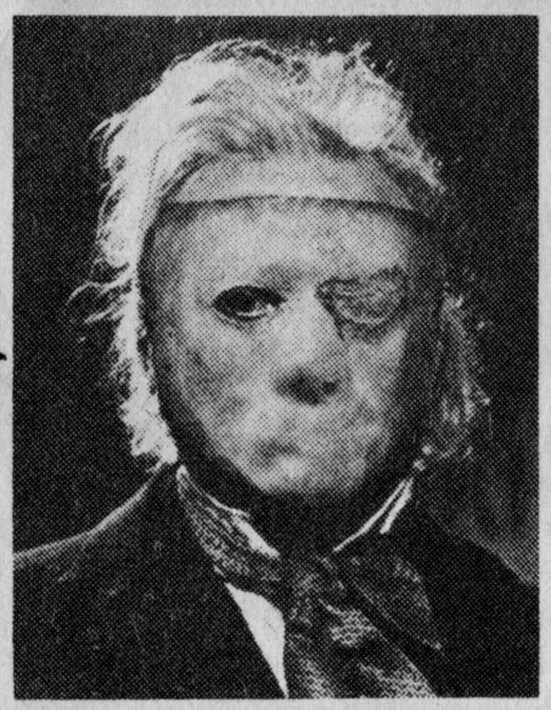
to his heroines from a stacked deck.



Phantom of the Opera

Often ogled but rarely touched, the Hammer heroine grows logically out of her Universal predecessors. That the viewer should initially place Elizabeth (Hazel Court), Frankenstein's intended in **The Curse of Frankenstein**, on a pedestal is predictable, in terms of the conditioned response to any attractive, potentially endangered horror film heroine; not so, Frankenstein's patently unchivalrous lack of concern for her safety. A poor girl who has been promised to her rich cousin since childhood, she arrives unexpectedly, with the Baron up to his neck in unholy research, to make plans for the wedding. He treats her with a polite abruptness bordering on neglect, to the point of accidentally wounding her at the climax, when he has meant to shoot his creature. She responds in kind, by marrying Frankenstein's tutor and ignoring her ex-fiancée's pleas that she testify to his innocence. And when, in the midst of all this, the Baron displays a sexually exploitative interest in his French maid, all connections between the old and new **Frankensteins** — indeed, between the old and new Romanticism of the horror film — tear asunder.

Jimmy Sangster's script for **Curse of Frankenstein** is both literate and sophisticated; Fisher himself states that he was fortunate to have it serve as his source and original inspiration for putting more than the usual amount of energy into the project. Throughout his career as a screenwriter, Sangster has specialized in applying salacious twists to the chaste formula of the Gothic novel. The best Sangster scripts have included liberal doses of sexual deceit, sadism, and psychosis: all corruptions of familiar Gothic patterns, out of which many a horror film motif has sprung. Thus, **The Curse of Frankenstein** places its heroine in a familiar **Jane Eyre** situation: the young girl arrives at the darkly-forboding-mansion, only to discover its deadly-secret at the end. But in **The Curse of Frankenstein**, she does not marry her Rochester; he neither wants nor needs her, and seemingly would prefer to forget about her altogether. Like a carrot dangled before a donkey's nose, planning the marriage serves sufficiently, in the Baron's eyes, to keep her occupied, and out of his affairs. In the end, having narrowly escaped from Frankenstein's abortive creation, she does not live happily ever after; instead, as in so many Sangster scripts, she is lucky to be living at all.

Fisher takes Sangster's spurned heroine and makes a pest of her. Slanting the film towards his protagonist, he belittles his female lead character by making her very presence a threat to the experiment; whereas in fact, Victorian ethics have arranged her marriage, thereby dictating her behaviour. Rather than establishing his heroine as queen (as the old Universal films did), Fisher makes her a pawn: no better than the French maid, the profane animal side of Woman, who also seeks to marry above her station.

As for Frankenstein, his most deadly enemy turns out to be the very compassion which a successful married life would demand. Objectively, his out-of-sight, out-of-mind method of dealing with his fiancée is even more pitiable than the trapped animal manoeuvres of the females in his life. But horror films have always sided in spirit with their heroes, no matter how deviant their conduct; for to be anti-social is to be respected as an individual. From **The Curse of Frankenstein** onwards, Fisher favours his selfish male; because in this brutally simplified world, the greater one's concern for others, the less one is able to accomplish.

Women fare no better in later Fisher films. The heroine of **The Revenge of Frankenstein** (also Sangster scripted) is cut from the original Hazel Court mould: selfless, yet latently aware of the effect her mere physical presence can have on a man. Here, however, her actions lead directly to the failure of Frankenstein's experiment. Fisher sets up his female lead as a straw-man symbol of acting upon emotion — diametrically opposed to Frankenstein's heuristic intellect — as the goal of all human endeavour. Thus, she listens sympathetically to the longings of Frankenstein's newest creation and loosens his bonds, allowing him to escape the life of scientific exhibitions Frankenstein has planned for him.

As with Universal's endless succession of pokey reporters and nosey girl friends, however, **The Revenge of Frankenstein** never holds its well-meaning heroine responsible for her actions. Nevertheless, Sangster has injected a tone of self-righteous snobbery into her character. Her father has arranged for her to receive a nursing position in Frankenstein's hospital for the poor; and her distant, slightly discomfitted manner with the patients and other attendants makes her more patronizing than helpful as an angel of mercy. The irritant of **The Curse of Frankenstein** becomes a mild infection here. Once again, Fisher's Baron is content to stand coolly by in hopes that the problem will solve itself. The film's final scene, in which an over-eager society matron introduces her cuddly, giggly, marriage-minded daughter to the relocated Dr. Frankenstein, makes for a harmless funhouse mirror reflection indeed of **The Revenge of Frankenstein**'s dominant female character.

Not so, **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed** (1970) — Fisher's polished, austere final word on the subject. This time, the Baron seems resolved from the start not to let women get in his way. The very nature of love itself is questioned by the casual facility with which he destroys two apparently solid love relationships. Extending life by transplanting brains — great minds in particular — is still Frankenstein's goal here; more specifically, he seeks to preserve the brain, and therefore the accumulated knowledge, of his former colleague Brandt, who has since gone mad. To perform his lackey work, the Baron blackmails a young medical student (whom he has caught stealing drugs) and his fiancée, at whose boarding house he is staying.

Curse of Frankenstein

The hermetic suspicion of the Sangster hero, in Fisher's hands alone, gives way to a downright aggressive sense of self-preservation; and Woman, whether she deserves it or not, is his primary target. Indeed, he starts right in on the unsuspecting fiancée. Treating her alternately like a child or a servant, he speaks with her only to snap out an order, or to scold her for her incompetence. "I need her to make coffee," he retorts, when her boyfriend demands that she be allowed to leave. Frankenstein later rapes her (not seen in American prints) — though not so much out of physical need or desire, as to keep her even more rigidly in her place. What is worse, the rape passes unmentioned, putting more space between the already distant lovers.

But even these security tactics fail; sexually fearful since the rape, she stabs the "new" Brandt in self-defense and allows him to escape. When Frankenstein jams the same knife into her, it is not really a murder, but the final act of humiliation performed out of an unresolvable aggravation with Woman, whom Fisher has continually defined as the omnipresent cause of Frankenstein's failure.

Having disposed of the young couple, Fisher turns his attention to an older, more established pair: Brandt and his wife. The latter enters the film, as the naturally concerned companion and wife, after her husband's abduction from the asylum. She leaves it fleeing her home and mate, a monstrosity now because his brain has been put into another man's body. But is his mind

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his essence? What has Mrs. Brandt really loved in her husband: a physical presence, in which the occupying soul makes no difference? Why won't she even pause to help what is at worst a remnant of her husband? **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed** provides only one possible answer: the Baron's.

This dog-chasing-its-tail approach to the problem of balancing love and work was the subject of an earlier (1960), even more obscure Fisher film: **The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll** (American title: **House of Fright**; also called **Jekyll's Inferno**). Like Whale's **Invisible Man**, Jekyll has immersed himself in his research to the point of total self-absorption. Like Griffin, he is fading away as a human being; only in Jekyll's case, a face-concealing beard, a weak croak of a voice, and an emotionally unitiated attitude towards the nature of good and evil (the very subject he is studying) serve as the shrouds of invisibility. Jekyll does have a wife; but where Griffin's fiancée worries and waits, Mrs. Jekyll has thrown herself deeply into a public affair with her husband's best friend.

This subtle reversal of horror film tradition couples with a more obvious one: instead of changing into a beast, Jekyll becomes a smooth-faced, delicately handsome man-about-town. Unfortunately for Jekyll, the success of his experiment burns itself off in revenge. The film — which scriptwriter Wolf Mankowitz claims was meant "to show the essential hypocrisy of the Victorians" (quoted in *The Observer*) — peaks when Mrs. Jekyll, violated by Hyde in the blood-red dressing room of an exotic dancer Hyde has taken up with, commits suicide; while at Jekyll's mansion, in Jekyll's bed, the dancer, dressed in Mrs. Jekyll's finery, awakes in the arms of Hyde.

Fisher's men and women exist in a world ruled by mistrust and contempt. On the one hand, his source is the commercially Romantic tradition engendered by the Universal horror films of the thirties; on the other, the more complex literary heritage of the Romantic movement which early 19th century England had spawned. The contemptuous pride of Fisher's protagonists springs directly out of the self-serving quest for knowledge of the Byronic hero — whose attitudes toward women were anything but courtly. The best known Romantics had glorified Woman as the embodiment of the emotional forces they sought to examine in their poetry. Others, from Byron to Baudelaire, provided a darker side to this philosophy by defining women as emotional tar pits. The films of Fisher, a rationalist operating within the extremes of an intensely Romantic genre, reflect this more bitter view. The fragile, transparent pedestal upon which history had placed his heroine had been standing for years. Before he topples her from it, Fisher makes sure that his audience can see clearly up her skirts.

TOWARD A MORE HUMAN MONSTER

Horror of Dracula (1958), the most popular and respected Hammer film of all, offers a moral universe stifling in its antiseptic cruelty. For the first time, audiences were shown the blood spurting from a vampire's garrotted heart; more importantly, one *saw* the connection between sexual submission and the parasitic pain of the vampire's bite made openly, almost casually, as if there never was any doubt as to the veracity of such an association. In its own way, the world of **Horror of Dracula** is even more dissolute than that of **The Curse of Frankenstein**; the muted depravities beneath the surface of human behavior come down out of the castle and go into the streets, the homes, and finally the bedrooms of a Victorian society glutted with order.

Revenge of Frankenstein

Within the bleakness of this world, a more athletic, more bestial Dracula cleans up like a fox loose in a chicken coop. Unlike Cushing, whose grace lies in the urgency he can inject into the most banal of lines, Christopher Lee is most effective when Fisher uses him as a gaunt, nonverbal presence. Unusually agile for a tall (6'6") man, Lee is even more the irresistible force than Lugosi; even more the intellectual (Harker has come to be his librarian), who has left the world of his books behind; more the nocturnal seducer, preying upon a public which is disturbingly amenable to being seduced.

Indeed, the vampire in **Horror of Dracula** serves as the embodiment of promiscuity. Jonathan Harker, despite his betrothal to Lucy, submits to one of Dracula's wives, thereby falling victim to the very power he wishes to destroy; Lucy, despite the fact that she has just learned of her fiancé's death, eagerly awaits her vampire lover. Her sister Mina, quite settled in her marriage, gives in quite pleasurably to the Count's advances, which are beginning to spread like a virus. It is fitting that Van Helsing, Dracula's nemesis in the film, is a self-avowed bachelor.

The Victorian world into which Dracula intrudes lies stranded between the mannered intimacy of the Romantic Age and the impersonal kineticism of the Industrial Revolution. As in most Fisher films, science remains localized in its influence, personalized, yet as fascinating as a new toy. Van Helsing records his notes on a singularly ornate gramophone; later, he uses a patch-and-paste transfusion kit to pump blood back into Mina. Aside from Van Helsing, however, nobody *does* much of anything in **Horror of Dracula**, besides getting rest, advising others to get some rest, or watching over those who are resting. Such a world is only too ripe for the sort of sexual dalliance which Dracula both embodies and ignites; that the highest achievement of the intellect in this sweetly indolent universe lies in its absolute preoccupation with sexual matters typifies the moral cul de sac within which Fisher's period characters all exist.

Horror of Dracula

Only Baron Frankenstein, in **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**, comes anywhere near to achieving the total sexual domination exhibited by Dracula. But Frankenstein is not a monster; and of all the classic monsters, Dracula is the most distantly removed from the possibility of regaining his humanity. Between these two extremes lie the other Fisher creatures: twitching, writhing, and partially whole, like the unwitting victims of a bomb blast. Unlike Universal's scrubbed-up, shadowy embodiments of nameless evils, Fisher's grubby monsters provide a gloomily deterministic end to human endeavours gone awry.

Fisher himself points up this difference between his approach and that of Whale: " . . . very much influenced by expressionism, he [Whale] attached more importance to his hero's appearance, to settings, to technique, than to human reality . . . without a doubt, all my characters are human" (quoted in Caen's "Entretien avec Terence Fisher"). Thus, Lee's semi-spastic, retarded clown of a creature in **The Curse of Frankenstein** represents a much more appropriate product of a distorted sensibility than Karloff's machine-like zombie. Similarly, his shambling mummy actually walks as if it has been asleep for 2000 years; by the time mankind has finished skewering it, blasting it, and covering it from head to toe in mud, the weary sadness in its red eyes has become quite understandable.

If Fisher's Dracula embodies promiscuity, his werewolf personifies sexual bestiality. Perhaps the most vicious of Fisher's films, **Curse of the Werewolf** (1961) pointedly associates its main character with the manners and meanings of rape. Such a definition is implicit in the werewolf legend itself; but as in **Horror of Dracula**, Fisher sets his interpretation apart by materialising this symbolic connection and placing it within the patently ferocious physical context which the cruelty of the legend demands.

As in most Fisher films, courtly love undergoes quite a trial here, with disorder continually threatening to break through and destroy an overly civilized, but under-policed, existence. Rape, implied or practiced, permeates every possible love relationship.

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The werewolf's mother, a mute servant girl, fights continually to repulse the advances of her master; she is not so successful with the crazed beast of a man with whom the frustrated marquis imprisons her. The sins of the father are visited upon her son. Hardly a werewolf by choice, he spends much of the film struggling with his urge to take the woman he loves by force.

Often, however, Fisher's monsters fall into a category which the horror film, presumably for box office reasons, has left largely unexplored: the monster which not only looks human, but would act human as well, if only he could. The werewolf may be a slavering brute; but he is also only one of several Fisher monsters to shed a screen tear out of awareness of the impossibility of his own predicament.

The Revenge of Frankenstein, Fisher's first "human monster" film, weaves complexities into the character of its creature, Karl, which lie above and beyond the usual horror potboiler's call of duty. Upon escaping, Karl returns first to the laboratory, to destroy his old body — though he knows that damage to his healing brain will nullify the effects of the operation, and possibly trigger a psychopathological cannibalistic urge, which Frankenstein has diagnosed as another symptom of failure. The night watchman catches Karl; in the ensuing struggle, he is hit over the head with a chair, and in a superb moment of mime, framed within one of Fisher's characteristic extended close-ups, the expression on this "monster's" face changes from the basest longing, as he gazes down at his unconscious victim, to an agonized awareness of what has occurred. After committing another murder, Karl finds his way to the heroine's house, bursts in on a chamber party Frankenstein is attending, and, lying crumpled on the floor, begs for his creator's help.

The rules broken by such an approach to the basic horror film formula are almost too numerous to mention. At the very least, of course, a horror film needs one good monster, who gets a crack at its creator, or the heroine, or both, before expiring in a spectacularly violent death. The advertisements provided some of these staples, even if the film itself didn't. A creature whose most gruesome trait is a pathetic awareness of his own monstrosity, Hammer should have known, is neither good box office nor the stuff of which "meat market" reputations are made. Perhaps the best Hammer films are the ones that nobody pays much attention to; for from **The Revenge of Frankenstein** on, many of Hammer's most intriquing, finely crafted films have been their most neglected ones as well.

House of Fright has suffered much the same fate. Shuffled immediately into second and third runs, it has remained one of the most difficult Hammer films to see. The low market for monster movies with no monster has assured **House of Fright**'s anonymity — its rather sophisticated psychological implications notwithstanding. Like a delinquent son, Hyde resents Jekyll and Jekyll despises Hyde, who is out to consume his creator's identity. They lay traps for each other throughout: the film ends not with a chase or a shoot-out, but with Jekyll, huddled weeping against a wall, after his "victory" over Hyde.

Hammer had apparently still not learned their lesson by the time Fisher was commissioned (they accepted only one of his earlier projects, **Horror of Dracula**) to film a third version of Gaston Leroux' **Phantom of the Opera** (1962). Though some critics acknowledged a certain literacy in this British remake, most pointed out the lack of mythic horror which had characterised the Chaney version. This new phantom wasn't even a madman: a trait which the relatively tame 1943 phantom had possessed. Instead, Herbert Lom comes across as gifted, intelligent, desperately lonely, and grossly ignorant of the ways of a world which would not think twice about stealing his musical compositions: consistent with the most human Fisher monsters before and since, but hardly compatible with the public's concept of the phantom. Significantly, the most memorable image in this quietly moving film occurs not during the unmasking scene, which is abruptly thrown away, in long shot, at the climax; instead, as the phantom listens to the singing of the young woman he has trained, he weeps silently, in close-up, behind the impassivity of his one-eyed mask.

After the failure of **Phantom of the Opera**, Hammer returned to the world of programmers, and Fisher to an increasingly sporadic succession of resuscitations and rehashings: some good, some bad, but most all of them ignored, even by those who have continued to follow the Hammer thread. Furthermore, only **Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed**'s Brandt — with his sad cow eyes and timid concern for his wife's feelings — exhibits any development in Fisher's original definitions of his monsters. Weak-kneed and bland, these creatures may be; but there is a nobility about them, a helplessness in the face of their predicaments which sets them apart from Universal's dimwitted collection, yet far above the programmer status with which they have been saddled. Pity the monster, says Whale. Watch the monster pity himself, adds Fisher, for he not only possesses feelings, but can verbalize them as well.

Apparently, Hammer will flourish as long as there are Romantic myths to recodify, sexual combinations to be reversed, patterns of violence to be reshuffled. In the past year alone, they have come up with a **Countess Dracula**, a **Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde**, and a female Jack the Ripper (**Hands of the Ripper**). However, signs of wear are beginning to show. **Dracula A.D. 1972**, for example, reuses the innovations of **Horror of Dracula** with such grossly casual abandon that one almost forgets how effective these new ideas once were. Hammer heroines moan mechanically while Dracula sucks their blood: blood which splashes indiscriminately across the screen in pandering self-parody of its original imagistic use. A prologue tacked on for U.S. release, in which a vampire leads the audience in a bouncing-ball recital of the Count Dracula Society Oath ("so help me Christopher Lee!"), merely compounds the crime, by openly inviting the ridicule Fisher films had so carefully avoided.

The satiric tone of many of these films places Hammer at a crossroads similar to that faced by Universal in 1948: what does a studio do with a formula when all that remains is to parody it? Universal made **Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein** and called it a day. Right now, Hammer is letting the new blood in their organisation play around with the old ideas and actors — which will suffice, apparently, until the public catches on and stops coming.

Fisher himself is conspicuous in his absence on these projects. In 1964, after the bulk of his work with Hammer was finished, he spoke of his future plans: "What interests me now is the study of other fantasy myths. There is certainly still much more to say about Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Mummy, but personally, I'd like to try something else. There are so many myths ... and we've hardly begun to exhaust the fantastic riches of our own universe." But what would Terence Fisher know about myths? And why would Hammer want to put their hands on a project that won't turn instantly to gold? After all, they've both been in it for the money all along. Haven't they?

END

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"The Murder of Fred Hampton"

by Gerald Peary

There are no credits on the brilliant documentary **The Murder of Fred Hampton**, for the makers of the film wished to include nothing to distract from their filming of the infamous murder of the leader of Chicago's Black Panther Party by government agents.

If credits were included, however, they would number only two, reflecting an almost exact division of labour between producer, co-director, co-cameraman Michael Gray and editor, co-director, co-cameraman Howard Alk, the subject of this interview.

Alk is a Chicagoan who first highlighted his artistic career by co-founding, in the late 1950s, Chicago's original Second City Troupe and then moving with the improvisational company to its Broadway production as an actor. Alk now lives in Ottawa.

Prior to **Fred Hampton**, Alk's career as a filmmaker had been confined typically to camerawork and editing. Perhaps his most uniquely creative project was to "co-edit," with Bob Dylan, **Eat the Document**, a totally fabricated pseudo-documentary which recently opened in New York.

If Alk, behind one-way silver shades, looks a bit like a Jewish rock promoter, a portion of his film career seems to touch on this image. In addition to serving as second cameraman on **Don't Look Back** behind D. A. Pennebaker, he was the editor of **Festival**, a full-length picture of the Newport Folk Festival. Also he was the admittedly confused editor of the schizophrenic youth movie, **You Are What You Eat**, attempting to make sense out of rushes which reflected the disjointed visions of a director who loved flower children and a cameraman who loathed them.

But finally to talk of Howard Alk in any but political terms is to misrepresent him. His conversation is filled with memories of Fred Hampton, a man who changed his life, and also of expressions of his total support of the programs of the Black Panther Party. And of his early films he seems most proud of a crude documentary which he edited in 1958 called **The Cry of Jazz**. Alk says, "It was made by a bunch of black cats in Chicago. The film was embarassingly primitive in large parts, but it was a film which was prophetic about the black-white situation."

What makes Howard Alk happiest of all? Not that Jean-Luc Godard approved of Alk's film, **American Revolution II**, and lugged it around France. "The thing that gasses me is that the Panthers took **Murder of Fred Hampton** to China where it is being shown now."

The following interview is slightly edited and rearranged from material gathered publicly and privately during Howard Alk's two-day visit to the University of Wisconsin.

Q: How did you and Michael Gray meet to make a film on Fred Hampton?

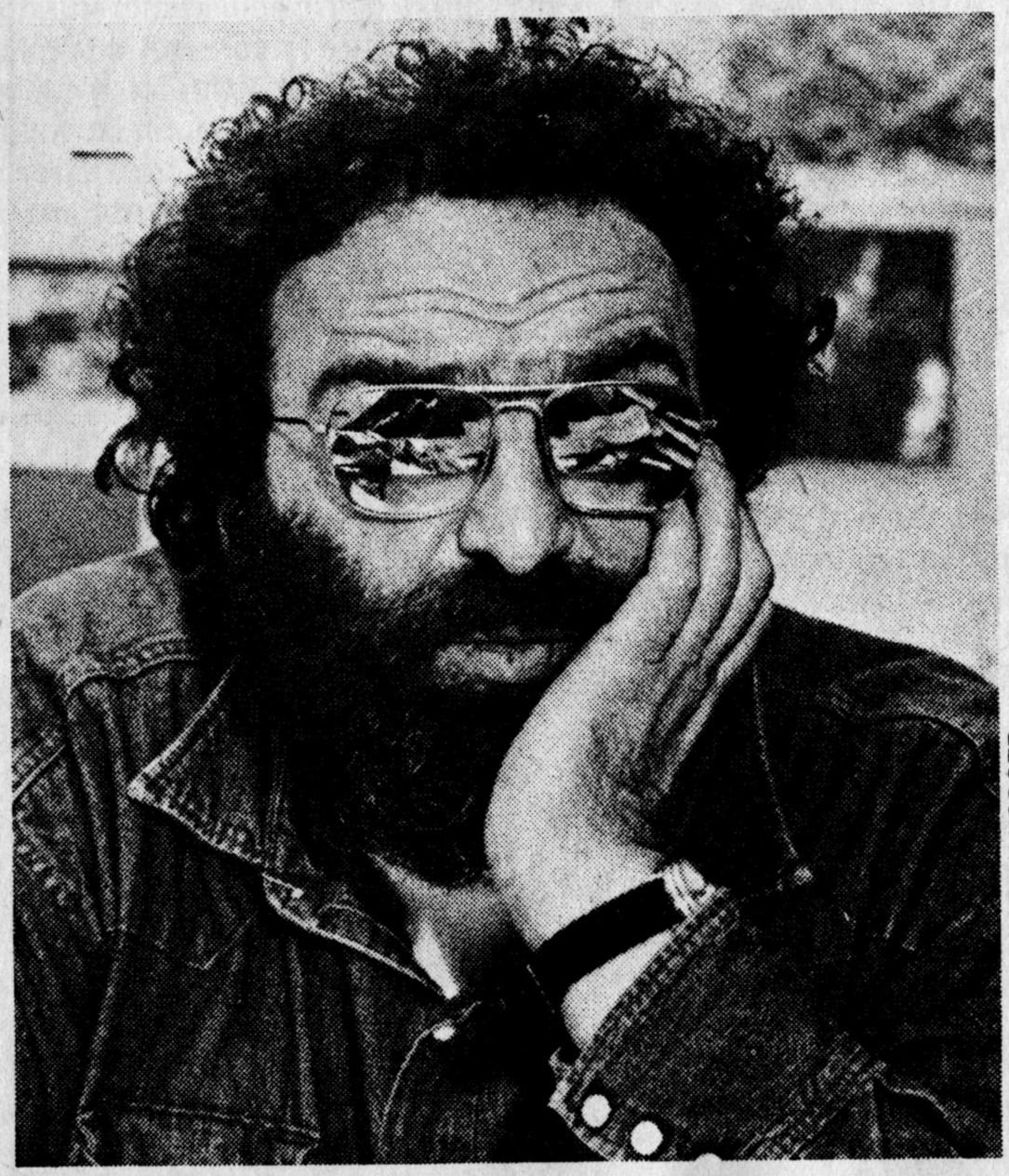
ALK: I had been in New York after the 1968 convention working on an American Civil Liberty Union's film answer to Mayor Daley. I was very dissatisfied with that work, with people like John Kenneth Galbraith talking about moral outrage.

This guy named Michael Gray came up and asked me to cut his footage on the convention. He had undergone some sort of political catharsis by being hit on the head while shooting footage. We agreed that we would not make another convention film, but a film about people in Chicago to whom that shit had been happening for a long time, and for whom that convention was no news at all.

The Panther office had opened that week in Chicago. I went in and explained what we were about, and they said, "Sure."

Q: Was the cooperation of the Panthers unusual?

ALK: It didn't strike me as odd that the Panthers were in favour of getting real information out. There was no question of conning them. Our purpose was not to make an "objective evaluation" as the networks would have done. Our object was to let the Black Panther Party be seen.



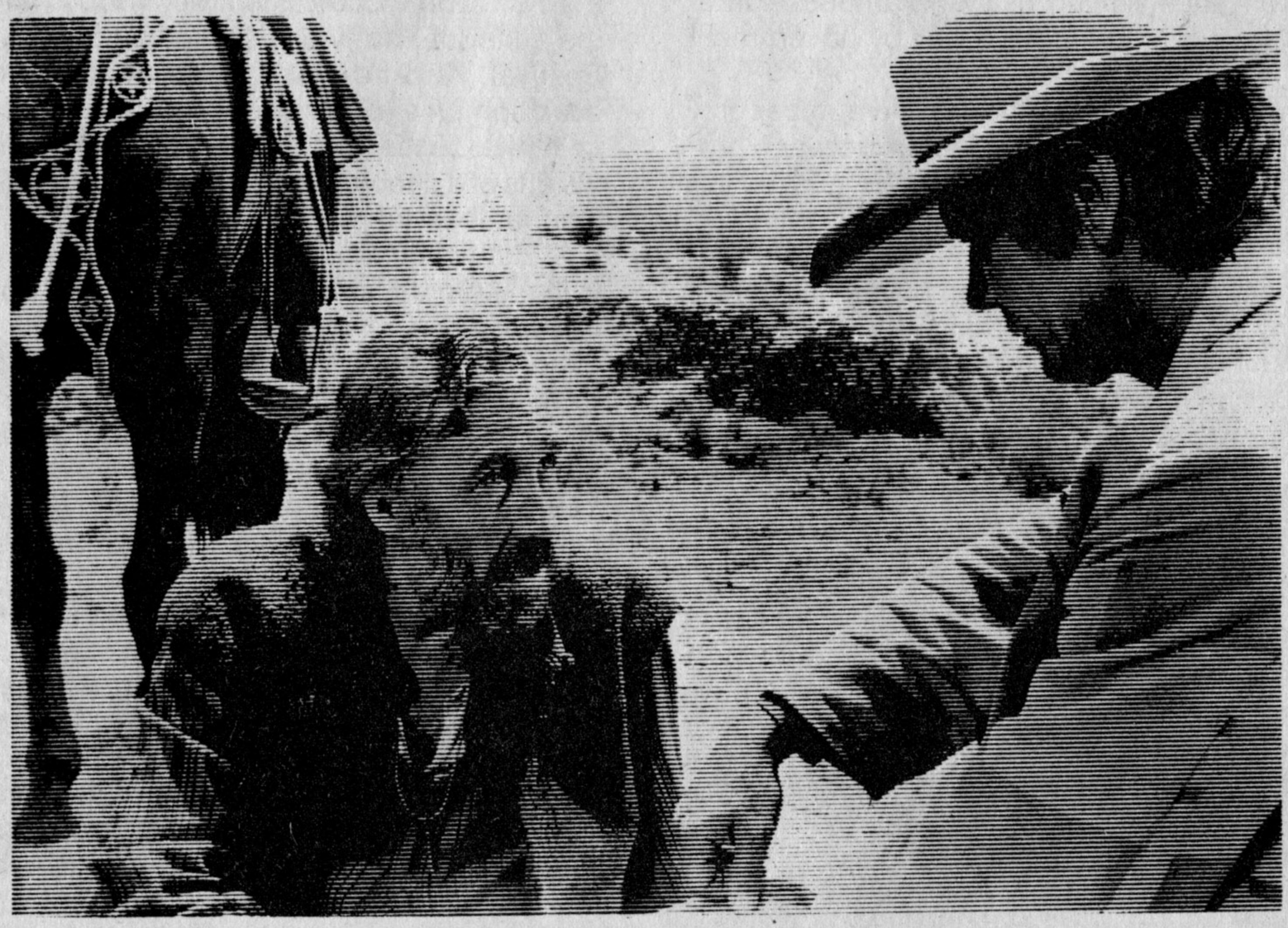
PHOTOS BY JAMES BRIAN KORGER

Howard Alk

Sergio Leone's Classic

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST

"Along with Kubrick's Space Odyssey, *one of the two great visionary/mystical films of the 60's: one looking to the future, the other to the past."*—Film Comment



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Q: Before your Fred Hampton film you made ***American Revolution II****?*

ALK: That's right. In addition to the Panthers we met a bunch of Appalachian white hillbilly shitkickers called The Young Patriots. They were trying to make the change from a street gang into some kind of political organization which would serve the people. They were having a hard time, but knew of the Panther Party.

We were shooting both groups simultaneously. The two met, and the film, **American Revolution II** became the story of the Rainbow Coalition in Chicago, which was Appalachian whites, Puerto Ricans and Blacks. The Coalition frightened official Chicago enormously. The police were terrified. [See an interview with Michael Gray in Vol. 2 No. 7]

Q: What happened to your film?

ALK: American Revolution II did very well critically but very badly theatrically, except in Chicago. It never did recoup the money necessary to make it. What we finally did was to allow bootleg prints so it could be shown.

It finally got into the hands of some tits and ass distributor which had become an artistically viable organization by handling the film **Joe**. They realized that **ARII** was a political film, and put it on the shelf with no way to spring it out.

Q: Why did you make a second film on the Panther Party?

ALK: When **ARII** was finished, it was clear that the Black Panther Party was not understood by white America and much of Black America. The next necessary thing to do was make a film sequential to **American Revolution II**. We were having a lot of trouble affording raw stock. But Al Grossman, who used to be Dylan's manager, gave us money. He said of Fred Hampton, "That man's got to be heard."

In addition, it was commendable courage and commitment on the part of Michael Gray to put $70,000 in hock in order to make sure this film was completed.

Q: Is there any way to break down what you did and what Gray did making the film on Fred Hampton?

ALK: I don't think it's important. Mike produced, I edited, we both shot. On this kind of film there is no director. We co-directed it.

Q: Were you conscious of creating any special image of Fred Hampton in your film?

ALK: The film centres mostly on Fred as teacher, leader by example. There is no personal material in the film. He and Mike and I felt that it would be irrelevant and distracting to show a thing like, "What is Hampton like when he is not doing his job?"

It was because he was doing his job that the state killed him. Fred Hampton was an enemy of the state. He made me an enemy of the state. You can quote me on that.

Q: Have you had the experience of watching Fred Hampton in black neighborhoods?

ALK: Yes, I have, and it's really terrific, not just because it's easier for people to understand Fred's black dialect. It seems to me that black audiences have been accurate in determining who tells the truth and who bullshits.

A lot of people seeing the film have the same idea that people had in life who knew Fred. That is, they love him. They are in the presence of a man who tells the truth. I think most people believe, when Hampton talks of "White power for white people," that he is not a racist, that racism is a byproduct of capitalism.

Q: Was there a difference in Hampton's manner when he was on camera?

ALK: No, because the material you see, for the most part, was Fred in public assembly, relating to a mass of people as you would speak from the stage. He didn't care about the camera, though. He was a serious man, not hung up about a movie being made about him.

Q: What were the circumstances of the "mock trial" in the movie?

ALK: Fred came from Maywood, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, where he had been, before moving to the Panther Party, a youth leader of the NAACP. He was very much loved in Maywood (a predominantly white suburb), instrumental in getting people elected in Maywood responsive to the people.

The people of Maywood made their courtroom available for the mock trial, set up by the Party as an instructional event for the people. Those playing "pigs" are community people of Maywood. The guy who suggests a policy of repression and genocide is a councilman whom Fred helped elect. Some of those who testified for the defense are indeed those who testified in the real trial.

Q: Was the mock trial arranged because the film was being made?

ALK: No. The Panther Party was into a whole series of people's courts. There was a people's inquiry after Fred was killed, as a public event. The Panthers just called up and said, "Hey, did you hear about the mock trial?"

Q: Would the Panthers tell you what to shoot?

ALK: No, they would just call us and let us know when something important was happening. One time they called me and said, "The pigs are coming down on our office tonight. Are you up to standing with us?" The day of the murder they called Mike and said, "Get over here and shoot every foot of this apartment." That footage was seen by the grand jury.

Q: Have you had people accuse you of being manipulative in building up a case for murder?

ALK: Nobody has accused me of that to my face. Some reviewers have hinted at the possibility that we may have been involved in special pleading, although I think that the case is very tight that is made, inescapable.

Now you may approve, if you are so inclined, of Hanrahan's actions, but I don't think you can take refuge in the position that the murders were a defensive act on the part of poor attacked policemen.

Q: In the film you allow the police to present their own cases, thus unconsciously incriminating themselves.

ALK: It's a question of giving people a fair shake. Everything Hanrahan says in the film is in chronologically correct order. I don't fuck with him in filmic terms. When he begins to crumple and bullshit and backtrack, it nappened in that sequence.

I'm not interested in getting people to scream "Right on!" and go crazy, I'm not even that interested in Hanrahan. I'm interested in the reasons that Fred was murdered, and in changing a system not responsive to the needs of the people.

Q: Did you have trouble securing television documentary footage of the events surrounding the murder?

ALK: A great deal of trouble, a great deal of money, a great deal of hassle. First of all, footage was missing. Some of it had been subpoenaed by Hanrahan the week of the murder. It was an interesting subpoena because it was partly for the footage yet to be shot, an unheard of kind of a subpoena.

Some of the missing footage had been on TV. CBS had run six minutes of the official reenactment of the shooting by the police on national TV, therefore it had to be made available

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for sale. And we had to go through the process of finding it, confronting them with its existence.

In another case of footage which had been destroyed or mysteriously disappeared, a copy had been sent to Huntley-Brinkley. There were tapes that nobody knew about down in the vaults someplace.

Footage was inordinately expensive, somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand dollars to the networks. I don't know how that compares with their normal stock footage sale prices. I only know that if you're going to make this kind of movie, you have to, somehow, beat the problem of getting bread.

There is also always the problem of revolutionary organizations getting their message out. Video tape seems the only thing that the Cleaver section of the Panther Party are into which has any virtue at all: their attempts to set up a communications network.

Q: Have you tried to sell ***The Murder of Fred Hampton*** *to distributors?*

ALK: The film was seen by an enormous number of distributors. The responses ranged from "We couldn't possibly handle this film because all those niggers will tear up the seats in the theatres," to "Documentaries don't make money," and every possible variation.

Q: How do you argue the point that, except for those that deal with rock music, documentaries don't make money?

ALK: Well, there are documentaries that have made money: **The Sky Above, The Mud Below, Mondo Cane**, the Cousteau-type films. Maybe documentaries such as mine don't make money because they aren't seen. I don't know if they would make money.

It may be total error on our part, given the nature of the system, given the fact that people are made acutely uncomfortable by this kind of film, to think that such films ever will be distributed to the mass of people who hopefully should see them.

Q: But don't you think that many people who voted for Hanrahan for State's Attorney in the primary know he is a murderer yet voted for him anyway?

ALK: It's a very discouraging situation. Sure, there were a lot of people who thought Fred caught what was coming to him. There were even black wards which went strongly for Hanrahan. Surveys were taken to find out why, and people said, "Well, we heard that name."

The real question of the Hanrahan murder plot is this: "Why were they so sloppy?" If you're going to kill somebody, then claim it was something else, why not go to the trouble of making the apartment conform to the way it had to look to support that story?

Either they're inept, or they are so contemptuous that they say, "If people know, fuck it, they're not going to do anything about it." Or else they are saying, "We want you to know. If you fuck with us, we're going to kill you. Nobody is to do anything about it."

Hanrahan may well have been right. He's going to be re-elected.*

Q: Why do you think no one went and killed Hanrahan in retaliation?

ALK: It was irresponsible to have considered that, because the heat that would have come down on the black community would have been unspeakable. The Panthers have made it clear that they are oxen on whose backs the people can rise if they choose. Their concept of the vanguard is to offer themselves, let the shit come down on them. And it comes down the minute they take the position of being free men. It's an outrageously courageous position.

Q: What can whites learn from the lesson of Fred Hampton and the Panthers?

ALK: White people are suffering from a lack of models. Black people had Malcolm and Fred. They have Huey. Models of new men, free men, cats who stand in free space and say to their community constituency, "We're here. If you're up to it, step in."

To the real American youth out there (as opposed to the wilted flower children, the underground newspaper bullshitters, the counter culturalists), people like Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin are disgusting. If they had those two available, ass would be kicked.

And to real revolutionaries, people like that are a disgrace. For Abbie Hoffman to talk about "Revolution for the hell of it," is an appalling goddamned thing, as Fred Hampton told him.

Q: What kind of film would you ideally like to make?

ALK: There are a lot of white people out there who have been stepped on and victimized, and who don't have the vision of how else it could be. It seems to me that it is this lack of vision which is one of the main things preventing people from moving. So I think here is the valid function of filmmakers. The film I would most like to make at the moment is one that is not my vision imposed on people at the other end of the camera, but coming from them. I would like to go around the country presenting people with the proposition, "OK, we're making a movie. It's cool. You can do what you want because this is only a movie. But assume for the purpose of the little movie that you had the power to run the community, what would you do? Let's play a little game called 'Running It.' "

Then let real people see possibilities of a different kind of society. Let farmers in Iowa see farmers in Michigan who are operating on a different kind of basis, and say, "Hey, those people are us. It's a lot groovier the way things are happening in the movie. Why not do something about it?"

Q: There is a scene in ***The Murder of Fred Hampton*** *which maybe hints at the kind of vision you would like to show in your movie: the breakfast program for children by the Panther Party.*

ALK: Mike shot the breakfast program, and that's the way the breakfast programs were! All the horseshit suspicion in newspapers that the Panthers were feeding those children's minds with "off-the-piggery" wasn't true. The point was to feed people who needed to be fed.

Some people are willing to dedicate themselves to serving the people and some are not. Fred Hampton was a man who was serving the people. The fact is that, in Chicago, since Fred's murder there are more Panther programs than ever before, four or five times more medical centres, ten times more breakfast programs.

Q: One last question: How do you respond to someone who complains that ***The Murder of Fred Hampton*** *is technically and aesthetically a faulty movie?*

ALK: Mike and I really didn't think if it was going to look pretty or not. In some cases we were shooting too fast. In the office scene, where we were waiting for the cops to come and raid the place, that's for real. There was 25 minutes notice, it was dark. There were no lights. That's Plus X film pushed to 800.

For technical errors the film can be faulted totally. There is sloppy camerawork, all kinds of sloppy shit, bad recording, bad ART. A bad film if you want to discuss film aesthetics.

But it makes no pretense of being a "movie." It's a political document, a sharing of material. Yet I think you get a sense of Fred, the man. And I think the case against the State in the second half of the film is tight.

You can't make a case for murder as an absolute, but you can make an absolute case for perjury. And the implication of murder is as close as it could be gotten to using the film media.

The Murder of Fred Hampton is available from Video Tape Network, 115 E. 62nd St., New York, N.Y.

END

*Gerald Peary teaches film at the University of Wisconsin Extension Division, where he is writing his thesis on the pre-*Little Caesar *gangster movie. He has appeared in* Cineaste *and* Focus on Hawks, *and writes regularly for* The Velvet Light Trap.

*Surprisingly, he was rejected by the voters of Chicago in the Nixon sweep, though a Republican ex-FBI agent was elected in his place through ironic help of anti-Hanrahan votes from the black ghetto wards.

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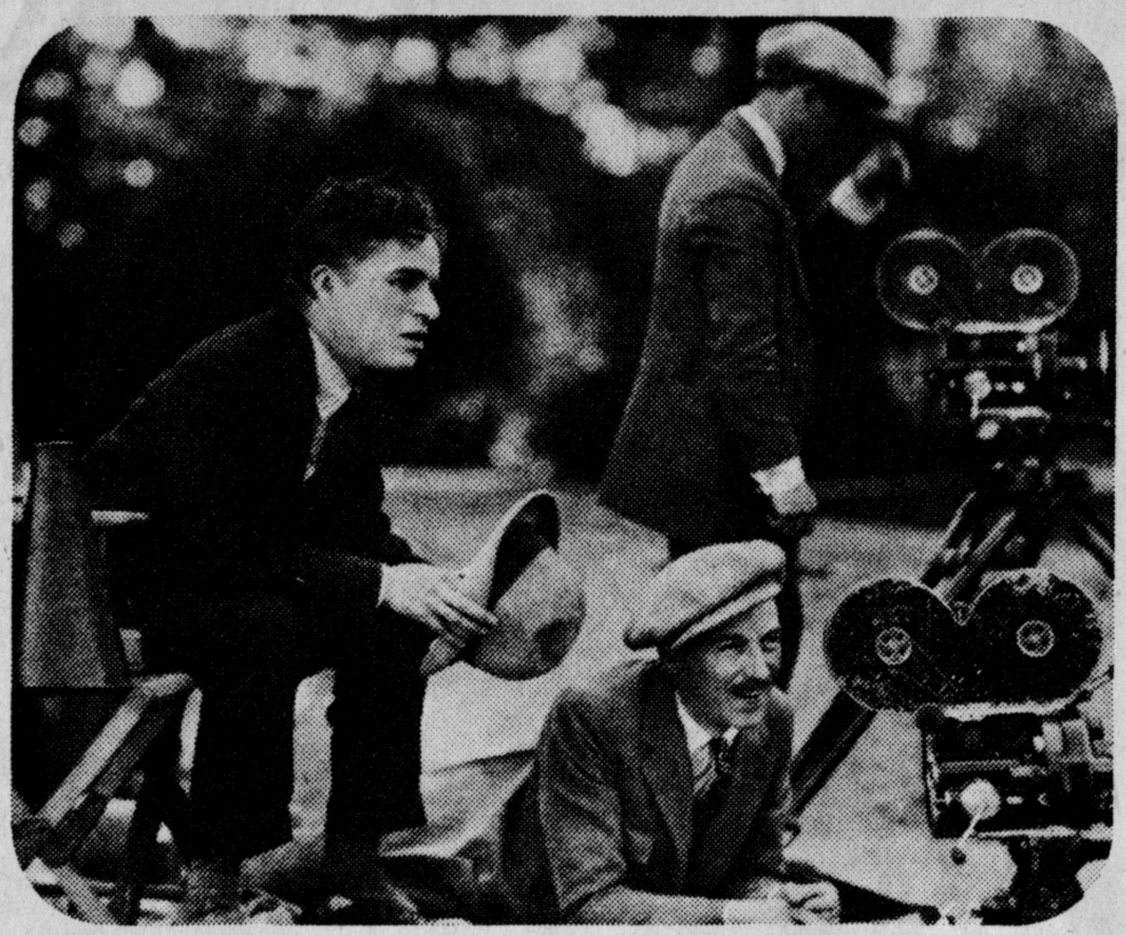

"A Woman of Paris" in 1973

by
Herman G. Weinberg

"It's one of the riskiest acting jobs ever undertaken by a major film talent and to Brando's credit it is never embarrassing .... The picture is graphic but hardly pornographic by domestic standards. A lengthy sodomy sequence, frequent full frontal female nudity, and possibly the roughest dialogue yet heard in a film from a major distributor and one grotesque scene involving Brando and Miss Schneider that can't be described here at all ...."

From *Variety*'s review of Bernardo Bertolucci's **Last Tango in Paris**.

"The theatre is a moral institution." — Schiller.

Half a century separates **A Woman of Paris** from **The Last Tango in Paris**, both distributed by United Artists, both dealing with illicit love, and both utilizing "Parisian allure" as a pretty woman dabs a touch of *l'Heure Bleue* to her ear lobes. There the similarity ends and, indeed, the perfume metaphor in the face of the roughneck goings-on in the latter would appear unseemly, yet for our purpose let it stand. Both films *are* set in Paris and advertise that fact in their titles, though the setting is no more necessary to one than to the other, certainly not in the sense that it *is* necessary to **Sous les Toits de Paris** or **Paris nous appartient**. As for the "last tango" of Bertolucci's title, it calls to mind an even earlier work than **A Woman of Paris**, the 1921 **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse** of Rex Ingram, in which the "first tango" of the screen, danced by Rudolph Valentino, stopped our breaths as indeed he, himself, was to do with his brief but ineffable screen appearance. So we've come "full circle."

All of which is by way of prologue to set the *ambiance* for reflections I have been asked by the editors to make on Chaplin's epochal film in the light of today's effusions, which are as opposite to the values that **A Woman of Paris** stood for as they could possibly be. Indeed, I welcomed the opportunity to balance the surprising put-down of the film by Bill Everson, that dedicated keeper of the cinema flame, in a recent issue of *Film Comment* with a, shall we say, "less jaundiced eye?" (He says he saw it for the first time very late, only a few years ago in Brussels, after a fatiguing plane journey, the debilitating effects of a six-hour time differential, a "lack-lustre print" with Russian titles, and already "half-expecting a disappointment" — a sextet of handicaps not even the original pictures of the Resurrection would have been able to survive.) Also, to question the dictum delivered by Pauline Kael in an equally recent dithyramb (read "dizzyramb") in *The New Yorker* on Bertolucci's whoop-de-doo, which she calls a break-through in films of the stature and importance of *Le Sacre du Printemps* in music.

In both cases, like the man in the song said, "it ain't necessarily so." Certainly Miss Kael's statement will impress only those who know not only very little about music and the history of music, but also about film and the history of film. It's one of those flights of bravado, like Athena springing fully armed from the head of Zeus (she hopes), but it won't work. That curious alchemy by which life is transmuted to art is not compounded of stuff so beyond the pale that it cannot be described (it stopped even Miss Kael herself, and Mr. Canby of the *New York Times,* too). There is nothing timid or mealy-mouthed about *Le Sacre* (and it's just as sexy as **The Last Tango**, being a barbaric evocation of ancient fertility rites) but it has the courage of its convictions, whereas the critics reviewing Bertolucci's film have not theirs, for all the brazenness and convulsive "Spanish fly" with which young Bertolucci (he is only 32, but it is not enough to be young when Eisenstein already made **Potemkin** at 27 and Welles **Citizen Kane** at 26) has imbued his film. Ironically, as to what sexual gymnastics stopped them (didn't Aldous Huxley predict a "Sexual Olympics"?) it is beside the point — at least for the purposes of these remarks it is. Suffice it to say that it is a libertine film (is the man in **A Woman of Paris** who keeps a mistress, perhaps even two, necessarily a libertine?) that is not concerned with bringing social customs up to date through a revolutionary concept, as Shaw did in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and Ibsen in *A Doll's House* — Bertolucci has neither a reformer's zeal nor a revolutionist's fury — but is concerned merely with selling a product. **A Woman of Paris** was not concerned with that — it was made to reward Chaplin's leading lady of so many comedies, Edna Purviance, for being a "good trouper" and for her loyalty — and, in fact, it flopped at the box office, despite the rave reviews.

"The film lives," said the *New York Times,* "and the more directors emulate Mr. Chaplin, the better will it be for the producing of motion pictures." To Eisenstein it was the most remarkable production of the motion pictures up to that time. He found it highly significant in its power to suggest, to stimulate the viewer into thinking — the direct opposite of the effects sought by **The Last Tango**, which even the most backward audiences would "get" without thinking. Like Mae West (or the movie image of that gracious lady) — a truck-driver's idea of a good time. As to what **A Woman of Paris** meant to Lubitsch and the Lubitsch "school" of disciples, we will come to that. As I said in *The Lubitsch Touch,* "Its effect was electric. An important segment of film direction in America was no longer the same. Soon it was being bruited about the film capitals of Europe that the American cinema, with two films, **Foolish Wives** and **A Woman of Paris**, had come of age. Certainly these two were the most sophisticated motion pictures made up to that time." But it was the Chaplin film, done without rhetoric or fustian, but with imagination and tact, that had the greater influence.

A Woman of Paris flopped at the box office, however, because it lacked the bait to hook audiences. The films that have flopped at the box office for the same reason (I speak naturally only of first-rate work by first-rate filmmakers) read like an honour roll of cinema achievement. Just like the list of titles one could compile of films that never won an Academy Award, which would read like another honour roll. You may be sure that **The Last Tango** will make a fortune. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. (And if Marlon Brando doesn't win an Academy Award as best actor and Miss Schneider for the best supporting role, at least the film should get it for "the best photography." Lord help them, if it gets it for best sound recording!) (Imagine a film today being influential because it was done with imagination and tact.)

Let's get down to it ....

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I saw **A Woman of Paris** first in 1924, shortly after its première, then again in 1926 at a revival by Symon Gould of the Film Arts Guild at one of his subscription showings at the old (and, alas, now defunct) George M. Cohan Theatre in New York, and a third time at an all-night screening given me by Raymond Rohauer (yes, Raymond Rohauer) in Hollywood in 1960, of not only **A Woman of Paris** but thousands of feet of out-takes of **A Woman of Paris**, showing how Chaplin worked. As to how Rohauer got that material, that, as they say, is another story, which I'll tell another time. Most recently (making it the fourth time), I saw it in the spring of 1972 through the good offices of the American Film Institute at the Library of Congress where a "pristine print" (that Everson was, unfortunately for him, not vouchsafed at the Cinémathèque de Belgique) reposes and is available for viewing to accredited scholars, researchers and the like, with *Bulgarian* titles, *if* you please . . . !

Obviously, not to have seen it the first time around is a handicap which is insurmountable, and nothing else can make up for it. That goes for every classic film because, as I pointed out in my introduction to *Saint Cinema* in my quotation from Jean Renoir, "What disturbs me most is the thought that films have such a short life. Techniques change, actors' styles change, and just as fashions become outmoded, films go into oblivion to join others that once moved us." But having said that, we can go on from there. The fact is that classics *are* being revived all the time, most of the time to grateful and enthralled modern young audiences (at repertory theatres as well as in classrooms) and both Everson and I can attest to that through personal experience. So they endure, not as "camp" items, but on their own terms, "asking no quarter and giving none." The good ones, that is. I don't mean the products of what James T. Farrell called that "grand Luna Park of capitalism, Hollywood, which the serious artist entered under portals bearing the legend, as did Dante find in Hell, 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.' " I don't mean the products of those unhappy men or even those who never had any hope to abandon, the movie-heroin peddlers of more or less diluted stuff, although Everson admittedly does have a better word for many second-rate works than he has for **A Woman of Paris**. He also has a way of setting up a straw man, then knocking him down. "One always had the sneaking suspicion," he says, "that if it was as good as it was supposed to be, Chaplin would be the first to bring it back . . . and since he hasn't chosen to do so, he was preferring — quite understandably — to rest on its reputation rather than risk a disillusioning re-exposure."

I'm afraid the only one who had that "sneaking suspicion" is Everson. *I* never had it and *I* wasn't disillusioned seeing it again as late as 1960 and 1972. As to why Chaplin hasn't reissued it, why should he? He reissued his films only for commercial reasons; the ones starring him were the ones the public wanted to see. Mo Rothman asked for the feature comedies and some shorts in his multi-million-dollar deal with Chaplin; he wasn't interested in **A Woman of Paris** any more than he would be interested in another Chaplin property, **A Woman of the Sea**, also starring Miss Purviance, which von Sternberg directed for Chaplin. **A Woman of Paris** was a flop in America the first time, so why should he foist it on Mr. Rothman? Again Everson does it: "Regardless of the sophisticated content of the film, it doesn't work because it just doesn't *convince*. As in **Monsieur Verdoux**, the French backgrounds are sketchy and fail totally to convey any sense of period or place." But it *is* the "sophisticated content" of the film that counts, you cannot say "regardless" to suit your purpose. The backgrounds of the Chaplin films *never* counted, they were *always* just "sketched in," if you like — it was the *foregrounds* that counted, the human beings and what happened to them that counted and which quickened his films and were, indeed, their very life-blood. To condemn both films on this ground is to miss the whole point of Chaplin as a filmmaker and to bypass all the values Chaplin has put into these films. To say they are unconvincing works because they are not "French" enough, and to imply that they lack values, on this score, is at striking odds with Everson's final confession that "It seems that a twenty, rather than a three, year gulf separates me from **A Woman of Paris**, and already I feel the need of a re-evaluation!" That, at least, is a considered statement, though it isn't just a twenty-year gulf that separates him from the film, I'm afraid, but a fifty-year one.

Everything in the film "worked" for me when I saw it again early last year, its rigorousness, its preciseness, its austerity and Cartesian skepticism, which is to say I saw it again through the eyes of 1924. Only those who can do this can truly evaluate a film that has physically survived this long. The values were in the discretion with which everything was done. "I treated the subject," said Chaplin, "in the simplest possible manner, avoiding emphasizing or underlining in a conscious attempt to show as much as possible through suggestion . . . . My film did not have all the hoped for success because its ending leaves one without hope."

But the silent American cinema, as René Clair pointed out, was renewed by this commercial failure. To Lubitsch it was a revelation that pointed the way, of which **The Marriage Circle** was but the beginning of a brilliant succession of sharply perceived works. "Although making no attempt to recapture the gray melancholy of Chaplin's incisive film," I said in *The Lubitsch Touch,* "he learned from it how to utilize in the domain of comedy the allusive art of nuances and subtle indications. In **The Marriage Circle**, Lubitsch subtracted irrelevancies from the field of vision, as Chaplin had done, and presented his characters in the light of clear day." There you have it — "Lubitsch subtracted irrelevancies from the field of vision, as Chaplin had done." That answers Everson on the "sketchiness of the French backgrounds" in **A Woman of Paris** and **Monsieur Verdoux**. Who better understood what **A Woman of Paris** is really about than that critic, quoted by Sadoul in his *Dictionary of Films* (so auspiciously edited by Peter Morris), from *Cinémagazine* in 1923, who shuddered "in the face of a nothingness greater than death, that of the mutual lack of understanding between two human beings"? "*All* human beings," he continued, "the profound Chaplin, following Maupassant, seems to imply. Is not a human being always alone?"

Those who achieve catharsis via the parting of the Red Sea according to De Mille are unlikely to achieve it at that moment which touches the edge of pain in **A Woman of Paris**, when Jean reveals to Marie, now the mistress of the rich Pierre Revel, the portrait he has done of her, not in the silks and pearls she wore at the sittings, but in the shabby old dress she wore in the past when they were sweethearts.

What has the tumescent **The Last Tango in Paris** to do with the circumspect **A Woman of Paris**? It is the complete negation of everything that was original and good about **A Woman of Paris**. If Bertolucci's film is the "breakthrough" Pauline Kael says it is, as much as Stravinsky's *Le Sacre* was in music, then what of **The Birth of a Nation, The Passion of Joan of Arc, Potemkin, The Last Laugh, Greed, Citizen Kane** and, yes, **A Woman of Paris** — were these not greater "breakthroughs" than **The Last Tango in Paris**? Or is Pauline Kael equating "breakthrough" with the degree to which Bertolucci has gone further than anyone else in the current "permissiveness" (read grossness) of the screen? Thus does permissiveness make voyeurs of us all. And for all the current palaver about "women's lib," why doesn't she say something about the contempt for women displayed by the recent spate of frenzied films like **A Clockwork Orange, Frenzy, Fellini Roma** and now **The Last Tango**? We are a long way from Juliet's remark that the mask of night is on her face "else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek." A long and dismal way.

A real director doesn't succumb to his own stimuli. Gustav Machaty, in **Ecstacy**, knew just how far to go and it is still the best erotic film because what you don't show can be even more eloquent than what you do show. It is one of the most elemental rules in dramaturgy. So did Pabst know where to stop in **Pandora's Box** and let the audience's imagination take over. And both these films date from more than 40 years ago. Literalness in sex depiction defeats itself because it is sex without

piquancy — and such sex, in the words of Oscar Wilde, is "cold mutton." The fact is that literal sex is a bore because it is redundant, and redundancy is a bore. What pride can you take in it?

De Sica, Rossellini and the early Fellini (until and including **La Strada**) once stood in some sort of organic relationship (and here I'd like to quote Aldous Huxley) "through the tradition of taste and feeling with the men who built Santa Maria del Fiori and the Malatestan temple, who painted the frescoes at Aozzo and Padua, who composed the Mass of Pope Marcellus and wrote *The Divine Comedy* and *Orlando Furioso*." But is it really possible that the Italianate genius shines in these most recent works of Bertolucci and Fellini?

If **The Last Tango in Paris** is the revelation Miss Kael says it is, it is for reasons that erase any worth in **A Woman of Paris**, or indeed in the complete *oeuvre* of Chaplin, of Lubitsch, of von Sternberg, von Stroheim, Dreyer, Pabst, Eisenstein, René Clair, Vigo, Jean Renoir, Murnau, Lang and all the rest .... Isn't the difference between Bertolucci and them to be found in their different hierarchy of values?

Chaplin, of whom Bertolt Brecht (who didn't think much of the movies) said, "This artist is a document which already qualifies as an historical event."

Of whom Shaw said, "The one genius created by the cinema."

Of whom his film, **A Woman of Paris**, said, in its screen foreword:

> Humanity is not made up of heroes and traitors but simply of men and women. And passions stir them, good and bad. Nature has given these to them. They wander in blindness. The ignorant condemn their mistakes. The wise pity them.

Words as encompassing as the screen ever contained. Words with an awareness of irony and pity, the two qualities required of the true writer, according to Anatole France, author of those masterworks of irony and pity, *Penguin Island* and *Crainquebille*.

It isn't that Chaplin wasn't aware of all that Bertolucci is aware of when he made **A Woman of Paris** in 1923. (After all, sex is a very old story. I, myself, have seen that kind of stuff in frankly pornographic films back in the early '30s. The only difference is that anonymous actors have now been supplanted by famous actors, and what were once regarded as outlaw films are now lawful films. That's "progress" for you. That's "breakthrough," 1972 style.)

After introducing the tramp, who's been "riding the rails," at the beginning of **The Idle Class**, Chaplin cuts to a close-up of a woman's foot, encased in fancy black hose and slipper, stepping down from the train platform to one of those portable station steps to aid the passenger getting off. Then he cuts to her *en toto* and we see the beautiful Edna Purviance as the wealthy lady who has alighted at the station and is disappointed that her husband is not there to meet her. But that close-up of her leg stepping down, which is the first glimpse we have of her, says it all, all that was ever meant or implied by "woman," since Adam and Eve ....

"...the allusive art of nuances and subtle indications ...."

Are you listening, Mr. Bertolucci, or couldn't you care less?

L'Envoi

In the field of film history and film aesthetics, its practitioners are given, far more so than those in the other arts, to claiming that they, and only they, "are possessed of a fragment of the true cross."

No doubt, the gentle reader, bemused by all this, will smile indulgently, because he knows that, truly, only *he* has it.

END

Herman G. Weinberg is the author of, among other books, Josef von Sternberg: A Critical Study *and* The Lubitsch Touch *(both E. P. Dutton; Clarke, Irwin in Canada),* Saint Cinema *(Drama Book Specialists, N.Y.), and* The Complete Greed *(Arno Press). Born in New York in 1908, he was first a music consultant in the scoring of silent foreign films and then edited and titled many foreign productions. He has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals and been U.S. correspondent for, among others,* Sight & Sound, Cahiers du Cinéma, *and* Blanco e Nero. *He was film editor for* Liberty Magazine, *has served on the juries of a number of film festivals, taught film history at New York's City College, and wrote a widely-syndicated column,* Coffee, Brandy & Cigars.*Erich von Stroheim described Herman Weinberg as "the first writer who did not put the facts about me ass-backward".*

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CARL FOREMAN

Despite a relatively unprolific career, Carl Foreman is one of the world's best known screenwriters. His meagre output is a result of a threefold disruption of his writing career by external events. His endeavours were first interrupted by World War II, some years later he became victimized by the infamous Hollywood blacklists, and finally, he returned to cinema as a producer, a change of mixed blessings.

Over the course of three decades, his writing credits have come to include: **Spooks Run Wild** (w. Charles Marion) 1940, **Bowery Blitzkrieg** (w. Charles Marion) 1940, **Rhythm Parade** (w. Charles Marion) 1940, **Dakota** (story by Foreman, screenplay by others) 1945, **So This Is New York** (w. Herbert Baker) 1948, **Champion**, 1949, **Home of the Brave**, 1949, **The Clay Pigeon**, 1949, **The Men**, 1950, **Young Man With A Horn** (w. Edmund North) 1950, **Cyrano de Bergerac**, 1950, **High Noon**, 1952, **The Bridge On the River Kwai** (w. Michael Wilson, both uncredited) 1957, **The Key**, 1958, **The Guns of Navarone**, 1961, **The Victors**, 1963, **MacKenna's Gold**, 1969, and **Young Winston**, 1972.

Since **The Key**, Foreman has produced all of his screenplays. He also produced **Born Free** and **Living Free** and directed **The Victors**. While recently passing through Toronto, he was interviewed by *Take One* associate editor, Joe Medjuck.

Did you write anything during the five years when, because you were blacklisted, you didn't get any screen credits?

I did some things but not a hell of a lot and it wasn't under my own name. What I did do during that hiatus, rather than whole screenplays, was a lot of doctoring. I'd get called in to fix this or fix that. It was very good for me, oddly enough, because I needed it.

Somebody asked me the other day: was my (and others') creativity affected by the blacklist? Which was an interesting question because the answer happened to be, yes. I know nobody who wasn't bumped hard, who didn't develop such a trauma, who wasn't affected. All the writers wrote very badly, without exception. Now some of them recovered faster than others for various reasons. Like Trumbo, and Ring probably. I know that my work was affected. I think where we were lucky was that we were forced to write. When somebody said will you fix this for twelve dollars and put somebody else's name on it, it was like going back into the gym for a prize fighter who had lost his timing, we had to start from scratch.

It seems ironic that the last credit you got before the blacklisting was for ***High Noon****. Did people find communist sympathies in it? Or wouldn't people looking for an allegory in it find instead a Cold War parable?*

What it was about at the time was Hollywood and no other place but Hollywood and about what was happening in Hollywood and nothing else but that. And that was perfectly recognizable to people in Hollywood when they saw the picture because I was using dialogue that was in spirit the same thing that I was hearing — "Don't do that; the town has had so much trouble; go away." It really meant "You love Hollywood; it's done so much for you; we can't have this kind of trouble; now why don't you be co-operative and go away."

Who found the story, by the way? . . . Wasn't it from a short story in the Saturday Evening Post?

No it's not. In Hollywood and in other forms of writing, there's a strange thing; usually when a fellow has an idea in New York, very often there's a fellow in Dubuque, Iowa, who has the very same idea, without either being guilty in any way of plagiarism. That's why some writers will never discuss their ideas with anybody — Richard Brooks, for example, won't let anybody look at his script until he is through shooting.

To start with, I wanted to direct **High Noon**, and I wanted to make a picture that would be new and exciting and would break some rules. Bear in mind that all of us were much younger then and we were the avant garde of Hollywood. So I had the idea of doing a film that would be time for time, which then was a new idea. The film would last an hour and forty minutes, and the whole action would last an hour and forty minutes. Therefore, there would be no dissolves, no fades, no opticals of any kind, there would just be minute for minute right down the line.

From this idea sprang the story idea and then later on the Hollywood thing came into it — those were the various steps.

So I was working on the thing and developing it and I told somebody the story who said, "You know, that sounds very familiar to me . . . something I read somewhere, in a magazine." Now in those days there were only three popular magazines that did short stories — the *Saturday Evening Post, Colliers* and *Liberty*. So we did a lot of research, and by golly we found a story called *The Tin Star* by a very good Western writer named John W. Cunningham and it was about an old sheriff who was faced with the situation of a killer, whom he had jailed years and years ago, coming back into town. The sheriff's problem was that he was all alone and he was old. That was the basic resemblance, and a very strong one, not the same character or anything like that, but close enough certainly that we did feel that the best thing we could do would be to buy the story, which we did. And, although we used none of the story except the basic situation, I think my friend Kramer credited the original idea to Cunningham after I had left, as a parting present for me.

Did you not get along with Stanley Kramer?

He and I were best friends until that occurred, like brothers.

Did you think Sam Spiegel would give you a credit for ***Bridge on the River Kwai****?*

Well . . . I thought later he would; I thought that when it

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was up for the Oscar . . . yes, I did think so, and I was deeply disappointed that he didn't. I was disappointed in David Lean too for that matter; I thought David would have had more class. As far as Pierre Boulle is concerned, how he could take that thing and live with it in Paris is beyond me, because Pierre not only couldn't write English at that time, he couldn't even speak it.

Is that why you started producing yourself?

No. What happened was that people in the business knew that I wrote **Kwai**, they knew the background of **Kwai**, and all that, and Columbia came to me and asked would I like to come back, I said, "Sure, I never quit, I was thrown out." So I said I'd be happy to come back as long as I didn't have to become an informer, which is why I left to begin with, and if I could come back on my own terms I'd be delighted to come back. And that was how it worked out. They thought of me as a writer-producer. They didn't think of me as a writer; they didn't think of me as a director because I hadn't directed; but they did know that I had produced **High Noon** so they took it for granted that if I came back I'd come back as a writer-producer. I wasn't about to say no. I had no *desire* to be a producer, although I did realize there was the advantage that I'd have a bit more control over the picture and the script as a producer than simply as a writer, but not all that much, because ultimately, the director gets involved and the actors and so forth. The producer gets to be too busy producing a picture really, and you can't hang around the set all the time because if you do it hinders the director.

*Why haven't you ever directed again after **The Victors**?*

Circumstances surrounding the pictures that have come up, but I'm going to. Next year it is my hope that I'll get back to it because it's much more fun directing a picture.

You did a couple of films for people like Monogram and Republic; did you work for them, or just sell them things?

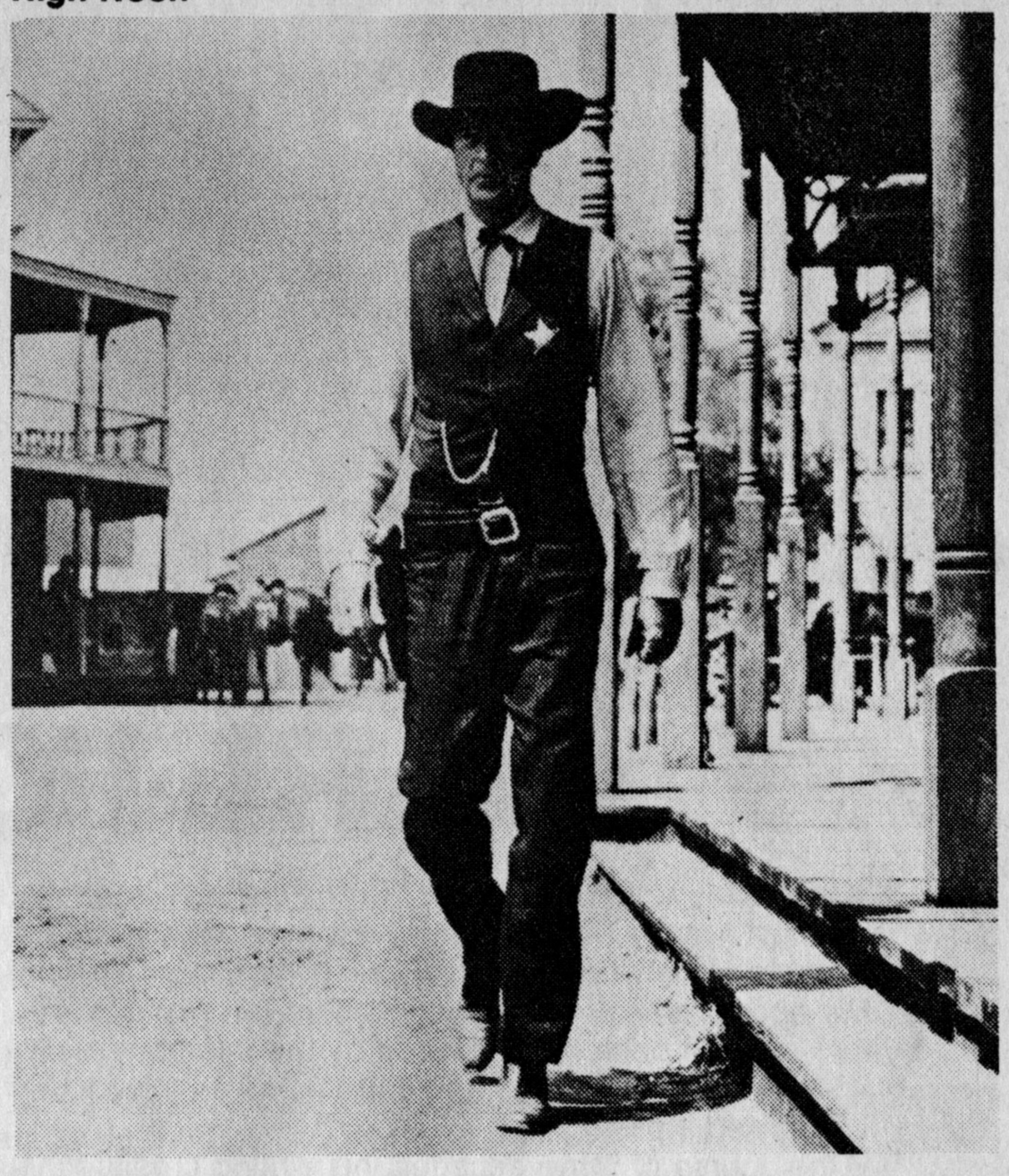
Well, that's how I broke in. I was working with Technicolor in the lab trying to break in, and I got run over one day on my way to work, and while I was recuperating, a young guy like me who was also trying to break in came over very excited and said he had great news: Monogram was looking for a picture for Bela Lugosi *and* the Bowery Boys and was having a lot of trouble finding one. So we came up with a script. And the way you did it in those days was you told them the story. They said, "Very good, now if you can go home and put that down on six pages we'll make the deal. I've got to see it on paper," they said, "because we've been stung once before. Some of you guys can tell a story very good, but when it comes to putting it on paper it's not there." So back we went to the room and we put it down on exactly six pages, and by god we made a deal, and then we had to write a screenplay — that was the hard part.

Did you enjoy it, or did you feel it was demeaning in some way?

We were very excited about the Monogram thing; the only trouble was that they didn't pay you anything, they exploited everybody. We got less money for the second one than we got for the first one, and we got nothing for the first one. We got less money for the third than we got for the second because they kept saying, "Well look now that you're in here, why not consolidate your position? There are plenty of fellows around who want these assignments and who are better than you, really." But we couldn't afford it; we finally found we were starving to death working for Monogram. We quit, went into radio for a while. Charles R. Marion was my partner; he does a lot of TV today. I didn't like radio, I didn't like being a gagwriter, and we broke up when I left. We were working for Eddie Cantor at the time, but we were two of ten or twelve writers and I don't think I was missed when I left.

The Republic thing came along on a different basis. Republic owned a book called *Let the Hurricane Roar* by a woman writer whose name I can't remember now and really it was a marvellous book about the early Dakota settlers, completely unsentimentalized as I remember it, no movie clichés, just how tough it

High Noon



was to live out there (very similar to Canada at that time). When they first came out they built themselves sod huts, very difficult. Republic had bought it, and for some reason or other, they thought of it as a vehicle for Vera Hruba Ralston [the Czech actress and former skating champion who married Herbert Yates, boss of Republic, and appeared in his pictures exclusively].

So I went off together with a very good director named David Miller who later directed the beautiful picture **Lonely Are the Brave** [1962] (we're still good friends) and we did a script based entirely on the book. They were very polite when we turned it in, but what they really wanted was a ve-hi-cle for Vera and John Wayne. And so a fellow named Joe Kane — I think he was a director and producer out there — rewrote it; it was called **Dakota** and it had no resemblance at all to the finished story. I got credit for original story but it had nothing to do with the picture at all.

How did you make the jump from doing that to working for Kramer?

No, what happened was, before I went into the army I was at MGM. And when the war was over, I could have gone back to work at MGM under the GI Bill which gave everybody a year back at their old job. Stanley and I met in the army and became very very friendly. We had a great deal in common: we both had great ideals about the cinema — we were young and we thought that there were a lot of things that the movies could and should do that they were not doing. And we thought when we got back, what the hell, why not make a company of our own. He knew somebody who had said to him that if he ever had a company and got a story, this man would put up the money for it. (He was a rich man named David Loew, connected with the Loew Theatres and all that.) Stan had worked for him as a casting director at one time.

So when the war was over, I didn't go back to MGM, we took a gamble and formed a company called Screenplays Incorporated, based on the then revolutionary idea that good pictures had to be based on good scripts. And this fellow did come through with the money and we made a picture called **So This Is New York** with Henry Morgan, based on four stories by Ring Lardner. And unfortunately it was a disaster. But again, fortunately, we somehow became associated with a lawyer who had contacts with wealthy people, and he got us backing for two more pictures — very low budget, and they were **Champion** and **Home of**

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Young Winston

the Brave. I was able to get the screenrights to **So This Is New York** and **Champion** from Ring Lardner. **Champion** was a big hit, so we were off and running. But then we changed the name of the company from Screenplays Inc. to Stanley Kramer Productions, and the rest is history.

Kramer just didn't stand by you at all then after the blacklisting? I find this a bit ironic with such a reputation as a liberal.

It is ironic, but I don't want to make this the forum for an attack. You must bear in mind that things were very difficult at that time and Stanley had been a long time becoming a liberal and he had grown to love President Roosevelt very much and he felt it was unjust that, as a liberal, he should be tarred with the Communist brush. We were very successful, and he really didn't want to be guilty by association.

Did you find that because you couldn't write under your own name, people took advantage of the situation?

It was amazing how many friends you got who wanted to give you a chance to work . . . for very little money.

Were there any major exceptions?

[long pause] Gary Cooper was marvellous. You find these strange contradictions in people. Sometimes the nicest liberal fellows you ever saw were the ones who turned and ran. On the other hand, there was Coop who was a rock-reb Yankee Republican, although he came from Montana.

But he testified at one point.

That was another time. Much earlier. So for Cooper to stand with me was bloody marvellous. He never quite understood the situation; he never thought it was going to go that far. Cooper was never a leading blacklister. Now John Wayne and Ward Bond, those guys were killers. But Coop was anti-Communist because he didn't think it was very American; he was never out for anybody's blood. Some of these other guys, if they could have had you hung up on a street corner, they would have.

Do you think that in addition to politics and ideals being involved there was ambition involved, that if you weren't working, someone else might get your job?

That would be very hard for me to believe. I think rather that people just got carried away, and thought that they were in a civil war and had to fight fire with fire, which is a phrase that John Wayne used to me in our one and only meeting. I said to him, "If you're so vehemently anti-Communist, are you saying that the ends justify the means?" And he said, "That's right." And I said, "But that of course is the Communist point of view; in order to make a better world, they feel able to do things that you might not like. So what is the difference between your position and theirs?" He was silent for a long moment, but he couldn't answer, and we went on to something else.

You are president of the Screenwriters' Guild in England now; were you involved with the Screenwriters' Guild in the United States?

I was always a member, I couldn't wait to join it when I broke in. It did a lot for me. I said a couple of years ago when they gave me the Laurel Award, I was a child of the Guild, in the sense that when I broke in, we got $400 for that first picture. That doesn't seem bad but just stop and think for a moment: of that $400, $40 went to the agent, so that left $360; now there are two of us, so that's $180 each. For a movie. For a full-length movie! And it went out and made these guys a fortune. And when TV came along they sold it to TV and we never got a nickel for it. At that time there was no protection for us; we weren't members of the Guild, and the Guild was too young to have a minimum. Now, the Guild made all the difference. It gave you a chance to breathe a little bit, and if you sold a script you could eat on it for a while, while in our case, for example, while we were still writing the script, we had used up all the money — we were starving before we'd even finished. So I'm very hot for the Guild.

Was the Guild basically just a labor union or were there political involvements?

It was a union, but that was, you must remember, a very political period, the period of the Spanish Civil War, the Japanese invasion of China, and it was inevitable that the Guild became a forum and a debating society for people with different points of view. Even today, I know that in my Guild back in England there are people who feel that a trade union has to be political if it's going to be a good union. There are others who feel that a union should be concerned only with matters of the profession, working hours and so on. They say that if we have all shades of the political spectrum within the Guild we're never going to convince anybody, and if we're going to be at each *other's* throats about political issues, how can we fight our natural enemy, which might be the producer, or whatever?

In our Guild in America, when we had meetings we had sensational turnouts, we used to get three or four hundred people out, and some of the best talkers you ever heard would debate. I was very young then, and I loved it. Unfortunately, though, it did get pretty bitter. It was the best talk show you ever saw, but enmities were created that were never solved to this day which is rather sad, because when you came right down to it, these were fellows who were venting their aggressions — with good ideas in many cases — but whether they were right or left, they were not really in the forefront of the fight for anything, they were just spouting off in Guild meetings. I mean, not one of them was going out and really doing something, nobody went out and volunteered for the Civil War, let's say.

One of the things Dalton Trumbo says in Additional Dialogue *is that he eventually quit the Communist party out of boredom. I think he said that it was about as subversive as a tea party.*

Fellows were great at sitting around deciding how the world could be improved but we didn't really have time to do anything. I did more picketing and marching before I broke into pictures than after, but I had more time then. I was on the WPA, the Writers' Project and, yes, I went marching with our guys — not knowing that our guys were very likely Communist-led, and picketed and so forth.

But did it bother you — I don't know how involved you were with all this, I mean were you ever a member of the — I hate to ask this because people have fought for their lives not to answer this question . . . .

Yeah, yeah, I was. I was a member of the Party in my youth, and like Trumbo I left it, I wouldn't say out of boredom particularly. I left it after the German-Soviet pact, which was very difficult for us all. And also because I had lost respect for the American party because it was quite obvious that they

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The Guns of Navarone

didn't know heads from tails and took their line from Moscow, and I did feel that the American Communist Party had to be an *American* Communist party if it was going to exist, and in my opinion, that should apply to Canada or any other country. It had become a sad joke to me.

Did you have trouble with the government then, with your passport or anything?

Luckily, when it became obvious that I couldn't function in Hollywood any more, somebody — in fact it was Bob Rossen — told me to apply for a passport (I'd never had one before) so I did. And when I got it in May of '52, I went to Europe and I stayed there. And in 1953, on July 4th, cornily enough, I was in England watching two army football teams playing on TV when a fellow came to the door with an airmail registered special delivery letter from the consulate saying please come in tomorrow morning and bring your passport with you, it's just been revoked.

That was very upsetting. So I went in the next day — without the passport — and met the Consul, and he said, "Can I have your passport?" I said, "Gee, I don't know, I would feel very naked without a passport." He said, "Oh well you can have it back after we — we'd just hold it for you. But we stamp it: GOOD ONLY FOR TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES." A one-way passage.

He was very embarrassed about it, I must give him credit; I met him many many times, later, always on the same business, but that first time he looked at me very strangely because he was seeing for the first time in his life A Subversive. Like today people look at hippies or other varieties of that sect. And I didn't look all that subversive, I was wearing a white shirt and a tie, nothing very dangerous. And I was looking at American tyranny in the guise of a very nice Yankee type, grey hair; as a matter of fact he reminded me very much of Colonel Carson of the Marines, a great man, the first American who recognized that the Chinese — the present Chinese — were the only ones doing any fighting (the Chiang Kai-shek group was not doing any fighting) and so was not a very popular man.

Anyway, I knew that the whole idea of the thing was to get me to go back to America, where I couldn't work, and therefore they'd be able to apply the pressure and hopefully I would then finally give in because I would need the bread and would become an informer and tell everybody how wrong I had been and return to Square One. So I never did give him back the passport. And we then began what turned out to be very long, drawn-out legal proceedings. It didn't start out as legal proceedings. I refused to deliver, and called my lawyer, a wonderful man who later became my partner, and he started to fight the thing in the Passport Division of the State Department. And after many months, he finally got them to agree to pass my case — for I had suddenly become a case — up to the next echelon of the State Department. And it kept on passing up and up and up and it finally reached the Rockefeller who was second in command to John Foster Dulles — and I couldn't believe it would — that as stupid as he was (and he was a *very* stupid man in terms of the world scene) and as busy as he was becoming the architect of our disaster throughout the whole world, that at least when they said to him, What about this fellow and his passport, he would say, "Don't bother me, I'm too busy fucking up China to mess with this guy, give him his passport." But no, this man had the time to say, "Oh yes, don't give him his passport." Then I knew the United States was doomed.

Finally we sued the State Department and John Foster Dulles and we got it back.

Did your current film, ***Young Winston****, have an epilogue in London which is not seen here?*

Yes. We had a couple of sneak previews here which were very educational and we found a number of things which either didn't play here or had no particular meaning to a North American audience. With a play you have out-of-town tryouts and then previews and you keep improving the play until finally it's opening night and it's the best play you can do. With films, especially in England, they're not set up to do that. So it's a gamble; very often until you open you don't know whether or not you've got a good picture, whether it's too slow or too fast or whatever, because it's different with an audience.

Are you particularly worried about the United States?

Not worried but concerned because it's our biggest market. If it fails in the U.S., where *is* it going to be seen?

For example, in England, we have a scene in the picture which takes place in the House of Commons where Winston and his mother (Anne Bancroft) have a conversation with David Lloyd George, who is also a member of the House. Now in England they know all about David Lloyd George, right? They know that in addition to having been Prime Minister, and a silver-tongued orator, and a great liberal — the man who, oddly enough, together with Churchill, was responsible for the whole Welfare State — they know that he was a tremendous womanizer. And the moment Lloyd George comes on the screen, they react to him. In this country, not a ripple. Since things like this are meaningless to an American audience, they become stage weights. For that reason, though we didn't remove this, we did cut out the epilogue.

I find it interesting that having made a strongly anti-war film in ***The Victors****, when you go to make* ***Young Winston****, the climactic moment is his making a speech against defence spending.*

Well, no. To me the whole thing is that father-son relationship.

So it's mainly a personal, not a political, story.

Well, here's the point: "Churchill," as I have Lloyd George say to him, "you are a child of your class." That to me is the theme of the picture: he was a child of his class .... At that age he would vary from extreme radicalism to extreme Toryism; that was one of his political problems in a way, because a lot of people said of him, "That Winston, he has no principles at all. He's liable to change tomorrow." Well, you know it's an odd thing, but after he was a Tory again, and when he was writing *Early Life,* if you look at the book he says, "I've always been proud of the social legislation that I initiated." Strange man. And when he and I met, and I'd decided to do this ...

... Sorry, he talked to you because of ***The Guns of Navarone****, didn't he, and suggested you make the movie of the book?*

Yes. We passed all that and were going to go forward, and I said, "Look, sir, I think that you ought to know something about me. I think you ought to know that the reason I'm in England is because I was declared a subversive in Hollywood and unamerican by the House Unamerican Activities Committee." And he said, "Ooh, I know all about that. Don't you think we checked you out very thoroughly before we began discussions with you. We have a bloody dossier on you, and we don't care about THAT!" That's why I like living in England.

END

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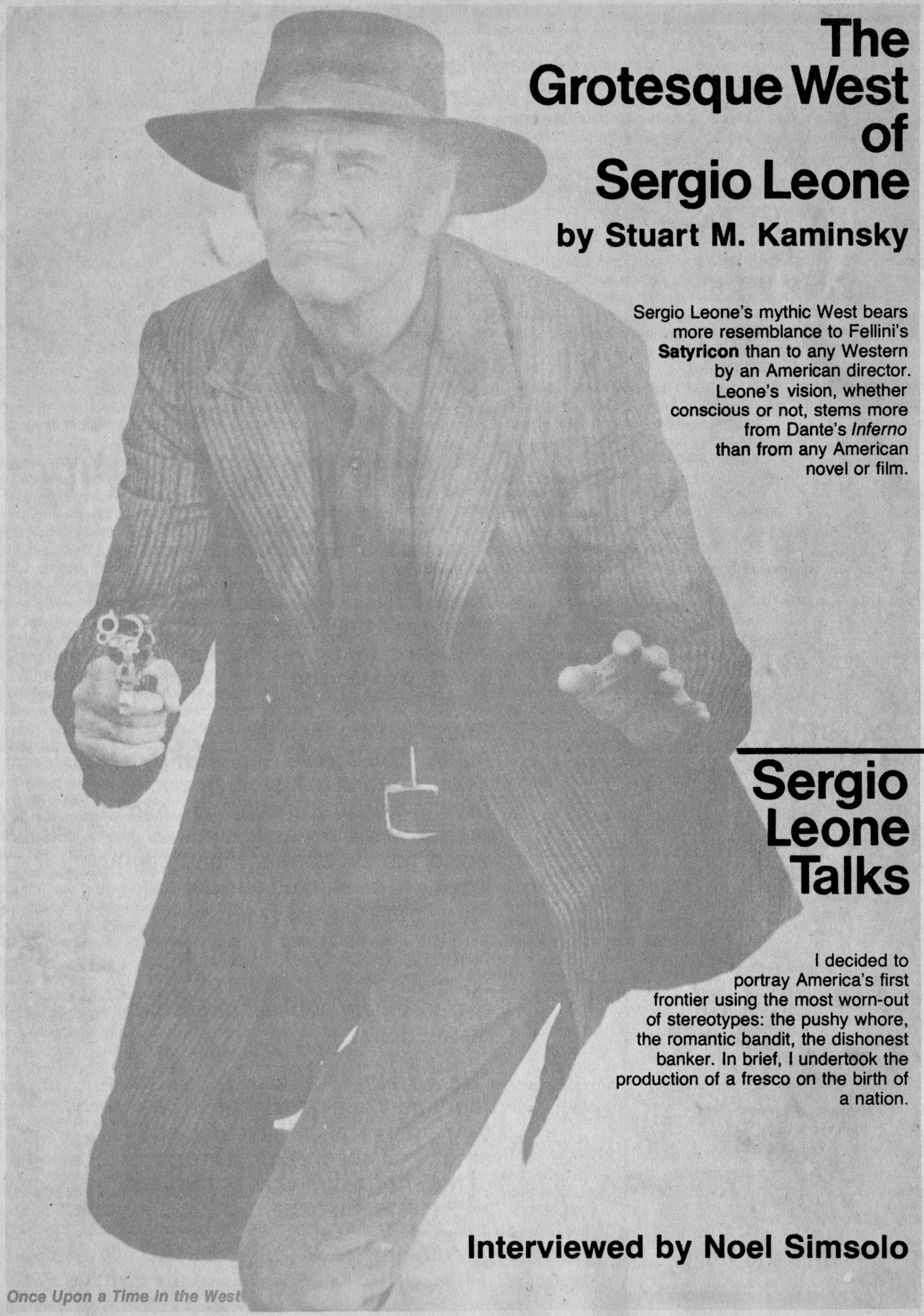
The Grotesque West of Sergio Leone

by Stuart M. Kaminsky

Sergio Leone's mythic West bears more resemblance to Fellini's **Satyricon** than to any Western by an American director. Leone's vision, whether conscious or not, stems more from Dante's *Inferno* than from any American novel or film.



Once Upon a Time in the West

Sergio Leone Talks

I decided to portray America's first frontier using the most worn-out of stereotypes: the pushy whore, the romantic bandit, the dishonest banker. In brief, I undertook the production of a fresco on the birth of a nation.

Interviewed by Noel Simsolo

The West of John Ford or Howard Hawks is, for Leone, an arena in which to explore his own sad, comic, grotesque and surreal vision of life. Leone is no more interested in what could or did happen in the West than he is in any conception of surface reality in his films. Leone's Westerns — **Fistful of Dollars; For a Few Dollars More; The Good, The Bad and The Ugly; Once Upon a Time in the West;** and **Duck, You Sucker!** — are comic nightmares about existence. That Leone is possibly working on the film adaptation of a Celine novel is perfectly appropriate. In this regard, it is worth noting that Leone's first Western, **Fistful of Dollars** is taken from Kurosawa's **Yojimbo**, itself a grotesque view of the world in which evil is pervasive.

BASIC THEMES IN LEONE'S WORLD

The feeling of unreality is central to Leone's work. His is a world of magic and horror. Religion is not only meaningless, it is false, a sham which hides honest emotions. Civilization is inevitable, pervasive, an extension of man's need to dominate and survive by living off others. The Leone world is essentially womanless. It is not just that women are ill-treated or handled indifferently; they hardly exist at all (Claudia Cardinale is a striking exception in **Once Upon a Time in the West**). Leone's world is set up for an interplay of male style in the face of world horror. In this he is very like Howard Hawks. In Leone's world, as in Hawks', death erases a man. A man who dies is a loser. The measure of a man is his ability to survive, to laugh at death. This is not a bitter point in Leone films; there are few lingering deaths and very little blood. Even the death of Ramon (Gian Maria Volonte) in **Fistful of Dollars** takes place rather quickly and with far less blood than the comparable death in **Yojimbo**. A man's death is less important than how he faces it. The only thing worth preserving in Leone's world is the family — and his world is such a terrible place that few families survive. In **Fistful of Dollars**, Clint Eastwood's primary emotional reaction is to the attempt to destroy the family of the woman Ramon has taken. In the later films, **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** and **Once Upon a Time in the West**, the only family life we see which is affirmed as "a good thing" is destroyed early by the evil character. As wild as Steiger's family is in **Duck, You Sucker!**, it is the closest thing in the film there is to any genuine feeling — and it is destroyed.

LEONE'S CHARACTERS

In each of Leone's Westerns, there appears a character who can, somewhat ironically, be described as "the good guy" (Eastwood in the first three films, Charles Bronson in **Once Upon a Time in the West**, James Coburn in **Duck, You Sucker!**). There is also a "bad guy" (Volonte in the "Dollars" films, Lee Van Cleef in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** and Henry Fonda in **Once Upon a Time in the West**). The assignment of this role to any character in **Duck, You Sucker!** is less easy because Leone's work shows an evolution toward a more complex idea of the world of good and evil. But even in **Duck, You Sucker!**, the diminished role can be given to Gunther, the egg-sucking young German-Mexican colonel who murders peasants and eventually kills Coburn. The final primary character in the films is "the ugly." This role appears in neither of the "Dollars" films, which are less complex than the later films, although the embryo idea does exist in the character played by Van Cleef in **For a Few Dollars More**. The "ugly" character is Eli Wallach in **The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly**, Jason Robards in **Once Upon a Time in the West**, and Rod Steiger in **Duck, You Sucker!**

The "good" guy for Leone is consciously aware of the kind of world in which he finds himself. He is amused — and Eastwood shows this most clearly — and aloof from the grotesque world, the human manifestations of which he destroys like flies even though he knows it is to no effect: the world spawns evil far beyond his capacity to destroy it. Although the "good" guy seeks material satisfaction, money, he seems to have nothing particular he wants to do with it. He is more interested in living according to a certain style, showing others that he knows how to live, face danger with amusement and without fear and, if necessary, how to die. In this sense, he becomes an almost mystic survivor, a new Christ offering a way to face life. Eastwood's appearance out of the smoke and his survival of Ramon's shooting is staged as a mystic experience to unsettle the killer. In **Duck, You Sucker!**, Coburn's first appearance out of the smoke of his explosions is seen by Steiger as a semi-mystical omen, a hopeful sign

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Sergio Leone, you have said that your new film, ***Once Upon a Time . . . the Revolution*** *[also know as* ***Duck, You Sucker!*** *and* ***For A Fistful of Dynamite****], is the second installment of a triptych. Could you explain this statement?*

I'll start with a flash-back. My first western, **A Fistful of Dollars**, was the first installment of a triptych. It was born out of a filmic framework: I had seen the Kurosawa film **Yojimbo**, where a theme from the American detective cinema had been transposed into a samurai story. With that perspective, I then proceeded to return the story to its native land by placing it in the context of a western. Undoubtedly I was conscious of the kinship between the subject of the film and commedia dell'arte and the work of Goldoni — the scenario bore certain similarities to his *The Servant of Two Masters:* the hero sells himself to two conflicting factions in order all the better to destroy them. While faithful to my own thinking, the film was also inspired by Shakespeare (as the prologue shows); thus the story goes as far as to make of Clint Eastwood an incarnation of the Archangel Gabriel. But it was with **For a Few Dollars More** that I for the first time directly grappled with my theme: the friendship that can spring up between two men. Remember, there were — in that film — two generations which opposed one another before uniting.

This first trilogy was completed with **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**. There, I demystified the adjectives. What do Good, Bad or Ugly mean? What does it mean when these characters are three killers thrown into the midst of a civil war? In that film, I was pursuing the theme of Chaplin, so masterfully exposed in **Monsieur Verdoux**.

Having finished with that grouping, I wanted to start shooting **Once Upon a Time . . . America**. I went to the States to get production started, but — alas — there is no forgiving success! They asked me to shoot another western. Why not? I demanded the right to make the new film in a framework that would allow me to prepare my project of **Once Upon a Time . . . America** and — at the risk of cutting off my nose to spite my face — I once again launched into a western with **Once Upon a Time in the West**.

With that film completed, I prepared myself for the start of **Once Upon a Time . . .America**. But, meanwhile **Once Upon a Time in the West** became a success, and so they asked me to put together **Once Upon a Time . . . the Revolution**, which originally I was only supposed to have produced.

Who was to have directed it?

Peter Bogdanovich, but there were certain incompatibilities. My assistant, Carlos Santi, was sounded out, but the financiers refused. I suggested my friend Sam Peckinpah. He accepted, but the backers insisted that I direct the production myself. Thus, a couple of days before the start of shooting, I found myself in a situation conceived for an American filmmaker. I had to adapt myself as I went along. I wanted Jason Robards for Juan and the young actor from **If**, McDowell, as Sean, because the men of the IRA were very young. I wanted thereby to show two generations — father and son — in opposition and unity. At the end, we were to have realized that the boy was wiser and more mature than the man of 50. But the contracts had already been signed. The choice was good, and I welcomed Rod Steiger and James Coburn. There were some small problems with Steiger in the early stages of the shooting. He thought of the film as very serious and intellectual, and had a tendency

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which he equates with religious experience.

The importance of style and the amused detachment from death can be seen in Eastwood's telling the coffin maker to get three coffins ready in **Fistful of Dollars**, only to have to apologize later when he shoots four men. In **Duck, You Sucker!**, Steiger rants angrily as he and Coburn wait to face the Mexican regiment alone. Coburn appears to be sleeping. We see below his hat that he is intentionally giving this impression, is amused by Steiger's annoyance. The "good" guy's indifferent quest for material wealth is also strikingly seen against his lack of interest in sex, a disinterest which ties in with his ascetic style, his distance from ordinary men. In none of the Leone films — except for the flash-back sequences in **Duck, You Sucker!** — does a Leone "good" guy show anything but minimal interest in women. The only thing that seems to move the "good" guy to emotion is a threat to a family. Even Bronson's hatred of Fonda stems from the murder of Bronson's family by Fonda.

The "bad" guy in Leone films is, in many ways, similar to the "good" guy. Neither is defined in his goodness and badness by traditional morality. Certainly, Eastwood's illegal activities in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** and **For a Few Dollars More** make his goodness definable in terms of some kind of morality above mortal law. His is an Old Testament morality of veneration of family, vengeance and personal style. The "bad" guy in Leone films appears to have all the skills and style of the "good" guy, but he is totally immoral, willing to serve anyone for money and to do anything for it, but he must retain his dignity while doing so. He is willing to destroy anyone, good or evil, who stands in his way. He lives only by his word, not lightly given, but once given he will destroy anyone — men, women and children, i.e., the family — to fulfill it. The "bad" man's gratification of needs is cold, even his sexual responses are clinical, acts of corruption rather than fulfillment of desire. Fonda's sadistic rape-seduction of Claudia Cardinale in **Once Upon a Time in the West** is a prime example. The "bad" guy is, ultimately, able to achieve satisfaction only in living out his accepted role. Often the "bad" guy sees in the "good" guy another character who lives by a code of style. Again, this is much like Hawks. The roles of John Wayne and Christopher George in **El Dorado** indicate this kind of respect. The "good" and "bad" guys in a Leone film respect each other, see the possibilities of alternate existence in each other, and recognize early that their styles demand that they eventually shoot it out in a morality combat.

The "ugly" character forms the third corner in Leone's triangle of personalities. The "ugly" one is always physically coarse, bearded, a bit dirty, but vibrant, alive and, in contrast to the morality of the "good" and the immorality of the "bad", he is amoral. The "ugly" character is hyper-human, can show great affection, great hatred and violence. He has no cunning, is open, direct and shows an earthy simplicity and sense of humour. In one sense, he is a threat to both of the other primary characters for he needs no style with which to define himself. When he lusts for gold or women, he sees in them the fulfillment of drives and the chance for enjoyment. He is unpredictable, a liar who eats with verve and gusto and complicates the simplicity of life as seen by the "good" and the "bad". We react with amusement and affection to Wallach, Robards and Steiger although they are shown to be murderers. The murders they commit are all matters of survival or angry emotions without calculation; and this is seen by Leone as being sympathetic. In all three films in which this character appears, the "good" guy's emotional distance is penetrated by the honest earthiness of the "ugly". In **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**, Eastwood humiliates but spares Wallach and leaves him part of the money. In **Once Upon a Time in the West**, Bronson clearly grows to respect Robards and honours his final wish of a solitary, dignified death. In **Duck, You Sucker!**, Coburn's facade is broken by his growing affection for Steiger which eventually destroys Coburn's confidence in his simple approach to good and evil.

LEONE'S VISUAL WORLD

Visually, Leone has some marked obsessions which contribute to his thematic interests. Many directors could work with and develop the same themes and characters, but Leone's forte lies in the development of these themes and characters in a brilliant and personal visual world.

No director, with the possible exception of Sam Fuller, makes as extensive use of the close-up as does Leone, and Leone's close-ups are often extreme, only a portion of a face,

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to come off in the style of Zapata or Pancho Villa. Once he understood his mistake, everything went well. Coburn, that's something else. With him, it's the star system: You explain the scene to him, he says "Yes sir," and goes off and does it.

So, I modified the script in order to be able to include the film as a parenthesis between **Once Upon a Time in the West** and **Once Upon a Time . . . America**.

In adapting the script, I was to an extent inspired by the novels of Joseph Conrad. I chose to oppose an intellectual, who has experienced a revolution (Ireland), with a naive Mexican. Mexico is, in fact, nothing but a pretext since I was thinking more of Dachau and Matthausen. The Mexican revolution in the film is only a symbol and not *The* Mexican Revolution, only interesting in this context because of its fame and its relationship with cinema. It's a real myth. To avoid misunderstandings, I rejected the romance of the sombrero, preferring to deal with the theme of friendship which is so dear to me. You have two men: one naive and one intellectual (self-centered as intellectuals too often are in the face of the naive). From there, the film becomes the story of Pygmalion reversed. The simple one teaches the intellectual a lesson. Nature gains the upper hand and finally the intellectual throws away his book of Bakunin's writings. You suspect damn well that this gesture is a symbolic reference to everything that my generation has been told in the way of promises. We have waited, but we are still waiting! The film shows my ideas, my dreams, and my regrets. The revolution of 1913 is a pretext to show these two men in the spectacular setting of a civil war. Moreover, I have the film say, in effect, "Revolution means confusion."

But in the current context of political urgency and films that are falsely militant, wasn't it dangerous to inject this observation on revolution?

It was so difficult, in fact, that the Italian partners rejected my title in Italy. I had to change **Once Upon a Time . . . The Revolution** to **Giu la testa**, which means — in Italian — "duck," but also "get out of the way," so that that title takes on a very precise social connotation.

So your latest film is pessimistic?

Once Upon a Time in the West was just as pessimistic. You had there the end of a world: the birth of matriarchy and the beginning of a world without balls.

It's in contrast to that great optimist I admire: John Ford. His naivité and openness allowed him to shoot **The Quiet Man**, that is to say, Cinderella. He has the sentimentality of the Irish living in the United States who still believe in green prairies extending into the future. Me, I'm a Roman, therefore fatalistic and pessimistic.

Is there a difference between being Roman and being Italian?

To be a Roman is so different . . . it is to be fatalistic. We have behind us a vanished empire and the knowledge of all the stupidities we have been guilty of down through the centuries. Moreover, we have the historical evidence of our empire scattered all through the town, as permanent proof of our errors.

Every work of art testifies historically to the period in which it was created. The pessimism of your films is not that of 1913 but of 1972, for we find it also in the work of other Italians like Damiano Damiani, Bertolucci, and Carmelo Bene. Is this a result of your work as a filmmaker or a function of your Italian spirit?

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usually the eyes of one of the three main characters. It is the eyes of these men that reveal what they are feeling if they are feeling anything; such characters almost never define their actions in words. Henry Fonda appeared for his first day of shooting in **Once Upon a Time in the West** wearing brown contact lenses. Leone, who had gone to great lengths to get Fonda for the film, insisted that the lenses be taken out. "He had bought my blue eyes for that first close-up after I kill the family," Fonda told me.

The extreme close-up is a major device of Leone's for getting to his primary concern: character. Plot is of minimal interest to Leone. What is important is examination of the characters, watching how they react, what makes them tick. It appears almost as if everything is, indeed, happening randomly, as if we are watching with curiosity the responses of different types of people, trying to find a meaning in the slightest flick of an eyelid. The visual impact of water dripping on Woody Strode's hat or Jack Elam's annoyed reaction to a fly is of greater importance to Leone than the gunfight for which the two appear in **Once Upon a Time in the West**. Elam told me that the fly appeared by chance while the scene was being shot and Leone liked it so much that he insisted on shooting all of Elam's reactions to it, mainly in close-ups.

In addition to using extreme close-ups to define character responses, Leone uses them for irony, most notably in the close-ups of the stagecoach passengers in **Duck, You Sucker!** These aristocrats are seen with food crumbs on their lips to emphasize their proximity to the kind of animal behaviour they ridicule.

The use of the pan in Leone's films is also remarkable. The pan from the firing squad past the church and to the poster of the governor behind which Steiger watches in bewilderment through the poster's eyes is a prime example in **Duck, You Sucker!** The shot ties the execution to the indifferent church and to the non-seeing poster and then to the responsive Steiger in one movement. The dizzying pan to follow Wallach around the graves in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** is another example of such a movement for thematic purpose; in this case to show the frenzy of Wallach in the midst of massive death.

At some point in each Leone film, the screen reveals the grotesqueness of battle, the dreamlike horror of multi-death. Visually, his ability to handle large numbers is as good as anything in De Mille or Lean. The battlefield scene at the river in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** is vast, complex and compelling. Interestingly, many of Leone's massive scenes of death are at border rivers whose waters offer no distance or separation for protection. The massacre of the Mexican soldiers in **Fistful of Dollars** and in **Duck, You Sucker!** are other examples. Generally, in his films, the destruction of hundreds seen on the screen, a meaningless destruction, is more nightmarishly appalling than in more conscious anti-war statements in too many films. For Leone, this destruction within his myth is an extension of the meaningless destruction of life by man. **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** is played against the destruction of the Civil War, a scourge which Eastwood, Van Cleef and Wallach either ignore or make use of. The North and South are indistinguishable. In one sequence in fact, Wallach and Eastwood mistake a dust-covered column of Northern cavalry for grey-uniformed Southerners.

The apparent joy and even comedy of destruction and battle in Leone films are often followed immediately by some intimate horror, some personal touch that underlines the real meaning of the horror which moments before had been amusing. In **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**, Eastwood encounters the dying young soldier after the river sequence. In **Duck, You Sucker!**, the battle at the bridge is immediately followed by the sight of the dead revolutionaries and Steiger's family in the dark cave. The comedy and zest of the battle are immediately undercut visually in both aftermath scenes. There is little dialogue. The vision of the youthful dead dominates.

Also, visually, Leone shows towns isolated in a vast wilderness with great space between them and when people in conflict appear together in a room they, too, are often separated by great distances. The rooms and interiors themselves are generally grotesquely large. The inside of the stagecoach in **Duck, You Sucker!** looks like a small, plush dining salon. The huge saloon in which Fonda and Bronson meet in **Once Upon a Time in the West** is opposed to the closeness in the earlier saloon scene in which Bronson and Robards meet.

At the same time, Leone's fascination with the spontaneity of living, his zeal for existence in the midst of his morality films can be seen in his handling of details. For example, food in his films is always colourful and appetizing and people eat it

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It is first of all a political pessimism with regard to Italy. Then it's also the pessimism of a filmmaker confronted with politics. Politics no longer make any sense in Italy! That's why I make the films I do. We believed in mankind and mankind has let us down. Sure, the situation is the same in other countries, but somehow we are the most unlucky. Our hypocrisy and our "politics of compromise" have put us in this crisis situation. As intellectuals, we have resigned ourselves, tired of the battle. What else can we think of but death? After 20 years of fascism, we are going to have to face it again. Isn't that the most unbelievable thing in the world? We are the only country in the world to live this absurdity. They are going to win and we act like the man who cuts off his own balls to punish his wife. It's the purest madness!

Given this situation, I am trying to create fables, epics. Our political cinema, after all, is too national; its meaning can only be appreciated in Italy. That doesn't interest me as much. In showing, for example, a typically Roman police official, Petri thinks he's making a communist film, when he's only really making a centrist one.

In the face of this international malaise, there is a new fad of Christ in America. Why? It's simple: there is a trend once again to believe in man, but one has to turn to Christ because there are no other alternatives.

The Americans didn't invent Christ; they imported him.

Exactly . . . so I produce these fables to show the world emotions, for I think that Mister Chaplin did more for socialism forty years ago with **Modern Times** than Togliatti has done here in Italy! My friend Francesco Rosi makes only political films. He has a thousand spectators who come to see his films, talk about them, and that's all. These spectators are already aware of the problem. I believe, on the other hand, that we have to inject today's political problems into the spectacular entertainments of the masses.

Italian cinema can try to survive. Neo-realism has already grown drowsy, but a fantastic cinema will be born because there is a lot to say. In fact, we are like one of those Latin American countries where the problems are most urgent. The creator has to regain his energy to survive. Living in the compromise of comfort and modernism, we have lost all our enthusiasm. Me, I live apart and don't give a damn about anything, but I know we cinéastes are going to suffer. There are so many contradictions, even on the political level!

But what do you think of this fad for political films?

It's getting to be a fiasco. This "type" of film is no longer successful and cannot find any backers. Anyway, these films were based on a sad paradox. It's as easy and superficial as those people who mimic politicians by imitating their voices and their expressions.

You claim you are making fables, and yet you put them together in bold ways. Here, each scene rests on the idea of surprise. Previously, you were elliptical, but in ***Once Upon a Time . . . the Revolution*** *each sequence is constructed along the lines of reversal and inversion.*

That's true. I wanted to make this film completely freely at the visual level and play with confusion to the point of making it a rule.

In your films, the characters are always being screwed, as they say. But the audience, too, is screwed.

Careful! For me, the cinema is a hobby and I always hope

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ravenously. Food is tangible, real and good. Wallach's gusto in eating several bowls of food given to him by Van Cleef in the prison is animal and honest. It makes the beating he suffers moments later all the more vivid and disturbing.

Another recurrent Leone image is the circle of the final shootout. The shootout is often held in a literal circle, a miniature arena into which a man finally steps and defines himself without an audience. In **For a Few Dollars More** and **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**, the shootout involves all three of Leone's principle characters. In all these cases, when the "bad" one enters the arena — as he must if his life style is to have meaning — he dies. His death is both welcome and admirable since he is evil. However, it is especially disconcerting to see Van Cleef, because he has lived by a code and has been true to it, tumble into the open grave or to see Volonte thrown on the wagonload of meaningless dead grotesques. Once dead he loses meaning.

Every Leone film has visual moments as vivid and powerful as the final shootouts. In **Fistful of Dollars**, there is the shooting of the "bad" family of father, mother and son as they emerge from the burning house, the slaughter of the soldiers, the exchange of Ramon's mistress for the hostage while the woman's young son and husband watch, and Eastwood's crawling escape from town following the beating he suffers.

In **For a Few Dollars More**, there is the bank robbery, Eastwood's first meeting with Van Cleef, Van Cleef's duel on horseback with the gunmen, and Volonte's speech in the church pulpit.

In **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** there is the opening sequence ending with Wallach in a freeze-frame, chicken leg in hand, flying through the window, Van Cleef's calm murder of the family and the man who hired him for the job, Wallach's confrontation with his priest brother, Wallach and Eastwood's trek through the desert, the battle at the river, Eastwood's loading of his gun behind a door just in time to meet the killers who break in, the graveyard search for the gold, and Wallach's stealing of a gun.

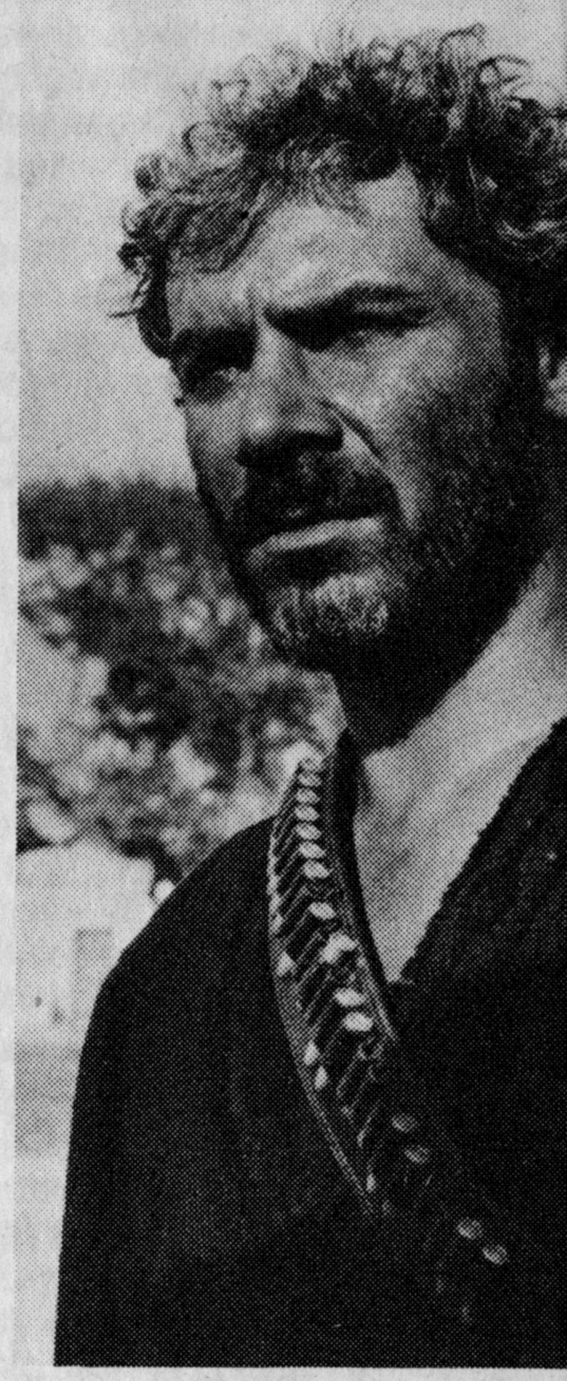
In **Once Upon a Time in the West**, there is Elam and Strode waiting in the station, Fonda killing the family, the card game on the train, Robards' rescue of Bronson, Robards' death, and the final, long ride of Bronson into the distance with the railroad station being built in the foreground.

In **Duck, You Sucker!**, there is the stagecoach ride, Coburn's first appearance, the attack on the bank, the executions in the rain, and the final battle with Steiger's confused reaction.

LEONE'S POLITICS

The obsession of Leone protagonists and villains, major and minor, with the attaining of wealth can be seen as growing out of a dominant strain in American Westerns. The extent to which all the characters — with the exception of Bronson in **Once Upon a Time in the West** and Coburn in **Duck, You Sucker!** — are driven by a desire for gold goes far beyond American sensibilities and into Italian intellectual politics and attitudes toward American capitalism. The implied Marxist attitude in the early films becomes explicit in **Duck, You Sucker!**

A Fistful of Dollars



For a Few Dollars More

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to get even with the spectator. So I always conceive of my work in a sincere and simple way. But I have been screwed so much—and not only by the American cinema—that I want to work against the bad habit of having to simplify and explain everything. If one writes that Leone resurrects the old myths and makes them even larger, that's true; but there has to be a biographical reason for that. I made 58 films as an assistant — I was at the side of directors who applied all the rules: make it, for example, a close-up to show that the character is about to say something important. I reacted against all that and so close-ups in my films are always the expression of an emotion. I'm very careful in that area, and so they call me a perfectionist and a formalist because I watch my framing. But I'm not doing it to make it pretty; I'm seeking, first and foremost, the relevant emotion. You have to frame with the emotion and the rhythm of the film in mind. It takes on a dramatic function.

Certain close-ups lay stress on the bodily functions.

Right, but it's not vulgar; it's the character's vision. For instance, the shots of mouths in the stagecoach in **Once Upon a Time . . . the Revolution** correspond to the bodily functions as seen by Juan.

But the audience?

The audience has no rights other than to take its place with regard to the character and the story. If not, they leave the theatre, that's all. If they are disgusted by the shot of the mouth chewing the beans, then that's because they don't understand that that is seen by a character in the film. I'd like to encourage this way of looking at a film. The public cannot say "that's vulgar" or "that's too insistent" because that very insistence becomes a style. We have to rid ourselves of these moral and aesthetic taboos. There will be no more rules, no more gods! I know that there are a variety of ways to make a film. Some filmmakers try to express a situation in four or five images that are very pure (or very impure). Their opening scene lasts eight or ten metres [25 to 30 feet]. That's not my idea. It's the two characters in the film that are making it, so in fact I have two directors with opposing conceptions as to the staging. They have the camera in their hands. While shooting, I just put myself in their place, and their two fantasies co-exist and meet within me.

You use flash-backs often.

It's necessary if I am to go to the rock-bottom of my characters. The function of the flash-back is Freudian. Since I returned flash-backs to their former prestige in **For a Few Dollars More**, this process has been exploited without cease. Previously, the Americans had been using it in a very closed way, too rigorously. This was a mistake: you have to let it wander like the imagination or like a dream. The last flash-back in **Once Upon a Time . . . the Revolution** was cut in Italy because there the public has sacrificed itself to a new fashion: getting up and leaving just a little bit before the end of the film. This was a little ticklish with this

Thus, much of this concern with killing for money can be seen as mere borrowing from Western conventions, as in the ruthless railroad tycoon plunging west, in **Once Upon a Time in the West**. Yet one can see hints, shadings, of Leone's sensibility at work even here. Leone shows this capitalist as a man with a diseased body. Fonda tells him, "I've watched the rot progress" and "A normal man would put a bullet through his brain." The tycoon feels pain despite his wealth and power; he cannot say, as Fonda does, that "sitting behind this desk feels good — like holding a gun." In **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**, there are some thematic brothers to this tycoon. Early in the film, Van Cleef comes to see the boss who has paid him to get information from the man who is to be killed after talking. This boss is in bed suffering from TB. In a scene of typical Leone black humor, Van Cleef tells the boss that, before dying, his recent victim gave him money to kill the boss. Van Cleef muses that once he is paid, he must always follow through, and proceeds shooting him through the pillow — an uncharacteristic way to kill someone in a western, and a vivid comment on capitalistic morality. The film also contains a brief scene of a war profiteer watching out of the window of a plush hotel lobby, talking about switching his allegiences when it is expedient and about his bad heart condition.

Thus Leone's treatment of money can sometimes stand out from his use of Western conventions, like the tip of an iceberg. The fact that the money in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** is buried in a graveyard can have immense Marxist and Freudian overtones — with money, associated with feces and death, accumulated through the old work ethic or death ethic. Sometimes the treatment of money surfaces in the dialogue. One of the most striking lines in all the Leone films occurs when the railroad tycoon is told that, even if he is dead, "You'll always leave a slime behind you — two shiny rails." There is another exchange of dialogue, with more political overtones, in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**, when Eli Wallach finds his brother, a monk, in a monastery. Wallach taunts the monk, "Preach me a sermon," and his brother replies that it wouldn't do any good — he asks Wallach just to leave. Wallach says that the only ways to escape from the poverty they were raised in are to go into the Church or to become a bandit, and he tells the brother that he chose the church because he was too cowardly to become a bandit. This scene is not really essential to the film structurally, but is important to Leone. Thus are the ways in which Leone bends the framework of the Western to express his own personality. Studying Leone's play upon this relationship between money and killing, it is dangerous to label his outlook as simply "European" or "Marxist", even in **Duck, You Sucker!**, but one must at least recognize it as his own and atypical of the Hollywood Western.

LEONE'S RELIGION

The scene between Wallach and his brother in the monastery is one of the few times Leone refers to the Church. In this scene, Leone evokes the Western tradition of two brothers on opposite sides of "the law", yet the scene expresses Leone's own dark vision. His west, which can offer becoming a monk or a bandit

The G, The B and The U

Duck, You Sucker!

film because it's stuffed with false endings. But as this flash-back ballet is really a film within the film, I wanted to follow its implications to the end and so I put the final flash-back into all the versions shown outside Italy. It's terribly important to see that the two Irishmen shared the same woman. We don't know whether Sean is dreaming, is imagining, or remembering, but it's essential to see that he plunges back into his egotistical fantasy. Nevertheless, I insinuate — through the editing — that Steiger *then sees Coburn's fantasy*. The two characters meet.

You recognize, then, that the audience can no longer project itself into one character?

Right, but someone has to win and the film, at the end, can be revealed as only, after all, a film.

A small point: why are your characters always so dirty and so badly shaven?

That's not an invention. I have consulted historical documents and can assure you that they were a lot dirtier in reality. As to their faces, they were incredible and had a lot more character than those of my actors.

It seems to me there that you're consciously designing a mask, like in commedia dell'arte . . . .

That's true. I'm doing it because I want to aggravate the situation, as opposed to the Hollywoodian exaggeration — that of glamour — which always has their characters clean and freshly-shaven. Historically, my vision is the more correct.

The photography of your films is more and more highly finished.

For my last film, I wanted to liberate myself from all system and so I hired Pasolini's director of photography, Giuseppe Ruzzolini. But this need to frame, that we were talking about, makes even the most inexperienced cameraman compose his shots like a painter. When there is a camera movement, I impose everything, from the framing at the beginning of the shot, to that of the end. I always worry about the cameraman. Now, there is a new invention which lets you follow on a television screen the work of the operator during each take. That's comforting. Previously, you'd ask, after the "Cut!," if the take had been good and the cameraman, looking uncertain, would reply with "Yes." That was very distressing.

How do you work when it comes to light and to colour?

I show paintings. For the execution scene in **The Revolution** I displayed some drawings by Goya on "The Disasters of War". For **Once Upon a Time in the West**, I showed the cameraman, Tonino delli Colli, a series of Rembrandt prints. I was after that monochrome colour. We often failed despite my demands.

I also control all the colours with my art director. Perhaps you've noticed that there's very little blue in my films. That's one colour that I hate. For the record, I'm the one who stains the clothes of the actors.

Music is important for Italian viewers and . . . .

Italians hate music! People talk about Italy as if it were

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as the only alternatives, is certainly more of a desert than a garden of opportunity. Leone's monastery is not perceived as a civilizing institution or even an arm of imperialism, but as a bleak means of survival. Also in **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** are a few bits of irreverency involving Wallach, as when he crosses himself distractedly when referring to a man he has just killed. We remember that one of the law's charges against him, stated early in the film, is stealing sacred objects, and he eyes some of the things in the monastery: these details just add some colour to the Wallach character, "the ugly", and increase his contrast to his reverent brother. There is also Volonte's sermon in the ruins of a church in **For a Few Dollars More** and Biblical language spoken at the funeral of the family in **Once Upon a Time in the West**, but Leone does not seem to have a strong attitude toward religion. Clearly, religion is a false hope which hardly merits venom.

LEONE'S DEVELOPMENT

Leone's films are explorations of the mythic world he has created. Unlike many directors, he is not simply repeating the same conviction in a variety of ways. Each successive film takes the same characters and explores them in greater depth. Leone's involvement with this exploration is intense. Both Fonda and Eastwood emphasize that Leone likes to act out the roles of his principal characters to show how he wants it done. He falls into character, lives the role. "He is a short, heavy fellow," Eastwood told me, "but when he acts out his roles you can see what he wants and you know that he really feels himself tall and lean, a gunfighter."

Leone's first Western, **Fistful of Dollars**, portrayed the nameless man, Eastwood, as sure of himself, a force for good, invulnerable. There are no alternatives to his behaviour. He is a cleansing force, the only character with whom we care to identify.

In **For a Few Dollars More**, the ambiguous character of Van Cleef inserts a new kind of honour, a new complication which undermines Eastwood's image as an invulnerable force for good. Van Cleef proves to be more clever in their non-fatal shootout in the street. Evil is still total evil manifest in an individual, Volonte, but Leone shows that something worthwhile exists between the moral extremes.

In **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly**, the trinity emerges and Eastwood, the moral man, is forced to accept the amoral man, Wallach, as part of a worthwhile existence. There is not, in short, simple good and evil to contend with, but undeniable animal feelings which are neither good nor evil, but part of us nonetheless.

In **Once Upon a Time in the West**, the positions are further blurred. Bronson's moral goodness stems from a desire for specific revenge. He is not simply a cleansing force, he is, like Van Cleef in **For a Few Dollars More**, a tormented man. Robards is not simply amoral. He has an earthy wisdom and a sense of honour and self. For all of Fonda's evil, his honour and courage are admirable.

In **Duck, You Sucker!**, the questioning of the morally good man, Coburn, is carried further. Coburn's confidence is shaken by Steiger's desire to exist with his family and Steiger's conviction that revolution is meaningless. Steiger's contention is that the poor need no moral champions, that they only suffer at their hands. Indeed, Coburn tricks Steiger into the revolution and causes the destruction of the amoral man's family. This is further complicated by Coburn's realization that his killing of his IRA friend had not been as clear-cut a righteous act as he had thought. Further, there is no simple extremity of evil in the person of a "bad" man. There is no person to destroy and end a cycle, to complete the morality play. The Mexican colonel dies but he has had no real personality, no presence. When Coburn dies, his moral certainty dies with him. In the end, we are left with Steiger in close-up alone, unsure of whether he can exist alone without family or moral conscience.

One can see Leone's films as mythical explorations of man's attempt to find meaning in life — an exploration at the heart of most worthwhile works of popular art — and his main characters as conflicting poles within each of us with a moral confidence pulling against immoral urges and an amoral, animal self being torn between. With each film, the answer grows more complex and fascinating.

END

Stuart M. Kaminsky is a regular Take One *contributor. His book on Don Siegel (excerpts from which appeared in our Vol. 3 No. 4) is to be published by Curtis around the end of this year. Another book, American Film Genres, is to be published by Pflaum/Standard.*

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a country of people who are music-mad; that's entirely false! The percentage of our population that listens to classical music is lower than that of Greece: around three per cent. Apart from that stupidity at San Remo [the annual San Remo Music Festival], we are one of the most under-developed countries in that area.

And yet choral societies perform operatic overtures in the villages.

That tradition is disappearing and interests only the tourists.

That brings us, nonetheless, to your collaboration with Morricone.

I'll tell you a story. One day, Stanley Kubrick calls me and says, "I have in front of me all the work of Morricone and I find I only like what he has done with you. Why?" It's simple. Ennio is a genius who works very fast. For a long time, he was ghost-writing for other composers, but he knows his art perfectly. Nonetheless, when he looks at a film for which he has to compose the music, he doesn't try to understand the work. He follows his own inspiration. Personally, I try to pin down with adjectives what it is that I want. I know exactly what I hope for and yet musically I'm thoroughly ignorant. Before settling on the film's theme, Ennio always advances a good dozen or so. The ones I reject aren't lost; I often discover them in other films for which he writes the music. The funny thing is that those films have nothing at all to do with the music! [In fact, rumour has it that the music is usually written *before* Leone's film is even shot! The music is then played and the film shot to it.—Ed.]

To conclude, you are going to start shooting ***Once Upon a Time . . . America****. Are you going to grapple with the problem of the Mafia?*

No, the film takes place just before the arrival of the Italians, in the '20s with the battles going on between the Jews and the Irish. In the United States, the Mafia didn't intervene until the '30s when it assumed a semi-religious, hierarchical form. In fact, the film is the history of a gangster who returns to New York after an absence of thirty years. He sees that his place has been taken by politicians, and decides to kill himself. It's the end of romanticism.

Are you going to make a contemporary film after that?

I have a project: Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in the United States of today. They will be the only two sincere and simple characters who don't understand the States. The United States is the windmills! That will be an exemplary fable on total lack of communication. But it will also have spectacle and violence. In fact, the cruelty and inhumanity will perhaps be more strongly stated than in the preceding films.

Why choose America and not Italy?

Because America is more astonishing; the U.S. conditions us; so let's show the original and not a bad copy. In the United States today is England, Germany, Italy, France, Africa; in brief, the whole world.

END

Leone's current film project, **My Name Is Nobody**, was scheduled to start a three-month shooting schedule the first week of May in Santa Fe, New Mexico (followed by further filming in Spain and Italy). Henry Fonda stars; the film is being produced by Fulvio Morsella and directed by Tonino Valeria. The film was "written and conceived" by Leone and is being produced by his production company.—Ed.

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AUGUST AND JULY

A Crawley Films release. Produced and Directed by Murray Markowitz. Editor: André Herman. Photography: Jim Lewis. Sound: Tony Hall. Cast: Alexa de Wiel, Sharon Smith. Colour. 1973. 90 minutes.

Seeing **August and July** at its première showing in Toronto in April was an extraordinary experience for me. I felt uneasily conscious of the situation as a sort of personal test, and as the film proceeded I had a tense and prickly awareness of strong feelings ambivalently tangling with one another.

For one thing, the expectations I was bringing to the film were all negative. John Hofsess had sneered at it in *Macleans,* and I'd heard, though not read, stories to the effect that Markowitz had done some very oppressive and exploitative things to Sharon Smith and Alexa de Wiel in order to get himself a movie. Everyone I knew who had seen previews had heartily despised the film, and apparently at a screening in Winnipeg those spectators who didn't walk out disdainfully, stayed only to titter and deride.

For another thing, there, only a couple of rows away, sat Sylvia Spring, who currently personifies for me the radical women's movement consciousness, and is herself of course a filmmaker and writer. All through the film I was acutely aware of Sylvia's presence in that audience, registering and responding to the love relationship of two women, as engineered and edited by Murray Markowitz. *"What is she thinking?"* I wanted to know, as though Sylvia, by virtue of her sexual-political locus, would have access to the authoritative evaluation of what Markowitz had brought off.

In an "actuality drama," to use Allan King's term, whatever human authenticity there is in the film comes from the actual encounter — as people — of the actors or participants. The role of the director, powerful and insidious, is twofold: in staging and precipitating the events, forcing them perhaps, interpreting the actors to each other, possibly violating their relationship; and in editing the results, giving a shape to the encounters thus precipitated, to produce a marketable commodity. As I watched **August and July** , not only were my evolving responses to it ambivalent in themselves, but I was uncomfortably doubtful as to whether those responses could have any critical worth. With radical perceptions emerging these days of the male objectification of women, the question was nagging me: can I, as a male critic, possibly be sensitive enough to the emotional realities of the love between two women, to judge in turn whether a male director has been sensitive enough in eliciting a film from that love? If I admire what Sylvia perceives as exploitative and false, or if I put down what she finds truthful and strong, do I have a leg to stand on?

Add to all this inner perturbation the fact that, in a film so intimate as to make **A Married Couple** resemble a Sonny and Cher special, every snigger and shuffle in the audience felt like a sting — and you have, or rather I had, a pretty heavy evening.

Well, I hereby assert that **August and July** is not a film about a love relationship between two women, but a film about a love relationship. And if I'm unqualified to talk about that, at least it's not because I'm a man.

Nonetheless, the lovers are women. Lately I've been seeing in Canadian films (and it's nothing exclusively Canadian) a rendering of heterosexual relationships which consistently presents women as altogether more authentic people than men. By contrast, men appear as shallow, evasive and emotionally dishonest, incapable of meeting other people with their feelings. (Interestingly enough, Alexa at one point reflects on the difficulty she always had in trusting the expression of feeling by men.) Frequently the films have ended with a radical breach between a couple who have tried to establish a relationship, the woman turning away from a man who cannot respond adequately to her demand for a total encounter.

So it is appropriate that a film should appear in which two women turn to each other with that demand, and that being present at it should be an awesome experience. Literally I mean that I felt a kind of awe, witnessing this extraordinarily intimate communion of two people so wholly concentrated on exploring their feelings for each other. Sharing a farmhouse for the summer, sleeping together, playing, wandering, reading Anais Nin, and talking, talking, talking, they pursue almost obsessively the fluctuations, misgivings, tensions, withdrawals and wonder of their communion. Nothing is allowed to go by. They are tormented by consciousness, and in turn torment each other; yet they are bonded by a marvellously open-eyed, loving regard for one another. At times they seem to turn away from the camera and speak too quietly for us to hear, as though what was growing between them was of infinitely greater importance than some guy's movie.

As for those people — like the Toronto *Globe & Mail*'s mean-spirited Martin Knelman — who found the film boring and trivial: well, O.K., I'll admit that at times, when another sequence would begin with the almost formulaic "Something's going wrong between us," I did feel like saying "Enough, already;" but each time, I was rewarded by a fresh articulation of complex emotions. And, yes, they did say and do some corny things at times, and there were some rather contrived moments, and perhaps the look of puzzled pain became too familiar — but I'd trade a year's supply of *Women in Love* for another encounter with these two women in love.

The greatest part of one's admiration must go to Sharon Smith and Alexa de Wiel for being the people they are. Their intelligent warmth and candour and complexity and loving humour, their joyousness and their difficult questioning pain, their sensitivity to each other — these are deeply moving and memorable. For the director and his crew one's admiration is for their attentiveness and tact. Jim Lewis' camera brings us very close to these two people, and captures continually the wonderful brightness in their eyes as they face each other.

Throughout the film I was afraid that Markowitz would go and do something crass and obtrusive, and at one point I thought he'd done it. The women are lazing in a row-boat, Sharon idly rowing and Alexa lounging in the stern. Suddenly the

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"TRUFFAUT'S Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me is a sheer delight!"

—JUDITH CRIST, New York Magazine

"A sheer delight. Aglitter with gem-like performances. Glowing good humor . . . a new pacing, a delicious touch of the bawdy and a sort of rowdy raucousness to Truffaut's picaresque tale." —JUDITH CRIST, New York Magazine

"A wildly funny film full of memorable characters! The complex, hilarious story is told with awesome economy—not a frame seems to be wasted."
—HOWARD KISSEL, Women's Wear Daily

"Bernadette Lafont exemplifies beautifully the natural force of the amoral female unimpeded by any sense of her own limitations. It makes a very pleasant entertainment, a worthy part of the Truffaut film assembly."
ARCHER WINSTEN, N.Y. Post

"A delightful off-beat comedy! Truffaut directs with a delicious light touch...an unpredictable black comedy that will keep you smiling in spite of yourself."
—ANN GUARINO, N.Y. Daily News

"An irresistible joy! Right now there is not a more pleasurable movie to be seen. HURRY TO SEE 'SUCH A GORGEOUS KID LIKE ME'!" BERNARD DREW, Gannett News Service

COLUMBIA PICTURES presents
A FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT FILM starring BERNADETTE LAFONT · Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me (Subtitles)
Based on the Novel by HENRY FARRELL (also starring) CLAUDE BRASSEUR · CHARLES DENNER · GUY MARCHAND · PHILIPPE LEOTARD
And introducing ANDRE DUSSOLLIER and ANNE KREIS · Screenplay by JEAN-LOUP DABADIE and FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT · Music by GEORGES DELERUE
A Les Films Du Carrosse—Columbia Films S.A. co-production
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scene changes to a pair of very proper ladies in hats, sedately boating on the lake. For a moment I thought we were in for a humorous-fantasy-sequence, concocted for our amusement by an editorialising director. But it transpires that the ladies, three of them as it happens, are nuns out for some innocent recreation. As Sharon rows by, they nod and smile. With great relief I relaxed again. Sometime later Sharon remarks that the grass is getting stiff and dry; fall is coming. "It's the end of our first summer," she says simply. If he knows what he's doing, he'll end the film there, I thought. And he did.

Tell me, Sylvia Spring, how would you have made this movie? *Bob Fothergill*

PULP

A United Artists release of a Klinger-Caine-Hodges Production. Produced by Michael Klinger. Written and Directed by Mike Hodges. Cinematography: Ousama Rawi. Editor: John Glenn. Music: George Martin. Cast: Michael Caine, Mickey Rooney, Lionel Stander, Lizabeth Scott, Nadia Cassini, Al Lettieri, Dennis Price, Amerigo Tot, Leopoldo Trieste, Victor Mercieca. 1972. Colour. 96 minutes.

The film's very title lends itself to lazy criticism and easy dismissal, and predictably, **Pulp** has received shoddy treatment from reviewers and distributors alike. **Pulp** is the second feature film directed by Mike Hodges, a young Englishman whose first movie, **Get Carter**, was greeted with a muted enthusiasm bordering on indifference (probably no less a result of the realisation of Hodges' television background than the film's narrative dealing in sex and violence).

In tone, **Pulp** could hardly be more different from **Get Carter**, although there are several visual echoes and a certain thematic consistency. In both films the hero is spurred into violent action by the knowledge of foul deeds perpetrated on a young girl. Jack Carter goes to Newcastle to avenge his brother's death (in **Get Carter**) but doesn't become very angry or violently effective until he learns that his niece, who may actually be his daughter, has been used by the men he is after to cavort in pornographic films. Carter wreaks havoc in Newcastle's sleazy gangland, emerging from the squalor as no less a pig than the thugs he is dealing with. The film marked a solid directorial debut for Hodges, and was entirely convincing, except when attempting to make (admittedly subdued) compassionate claims for Carter's brutal actions. In **Pulp**, Mickey King is a cynically impassive observer until he finds out that some men now in high office were once involved in a gang bang that led to a girl's death. King's added incentive to action is the unwanted attention of Miller, one of the rapists, who is trying to kill him.

As in the first film, the final show-down between the goodie King and the baddie Miller (although in **Get Carter** it was more a matter between the not-so-baddie and the very-very-baddie) takes place on a deserted beach, this time one bathed in sunlight and unscarred by industrial blemishes, in keeping with the lighter, more whimsical air of the narrative. For **Pulp** is generally an affectionate pastiche of the American thrillers and gangster movies of the '40s, and very effectively amusing when Hodges remembers not to nudge his audience too vigorously. His comically ingenius plot concerns King, a pulp fiction writer prone to the purplest of prose, being assigned to ghost-author an autobiography by Preston Gilbert, a once famous actor who specialized in gangster movies; all too quickly, King finds himself in the middle of a situation rivalling his own plots for murder and intrigue.

As Gilbert, Mickey Rooney is splendid: hurling insults at everyone, vainly staring at his pathetic figure in one of his innumerable mirrors, performing a reworking of his demented-waiter routine (seen in Richard Quine's **Sound Off**), and generally being obnoxious. Two of the other players also appropriately recall a by-gone era of filmmaking: as Betty, Lizabeth Scott doesn't have much to do, but her presence is deeply felt, and Lionel Stander, a veritable ursus horribilis of a man with a grizzly's gruff growl for a voice, is immediately recognizable as every hood you'd care not to meet. Michael Caine, in turn, has been given his best roles in Hodges' films, and has produced his most respectable performances in **Pulp** and **Get Carter** since his emergence in the mid-'60s in **The Ipcress File** and **Alfie**.

Hodges has a keen eye for the grotesqueries of Mediterranean life (a pick-up truck, with a mutilated cab in tow, interrupting a sombre parade; a group of midgets swarming around a tourist site; a deserted village with a Coca-Cola sign prominently visible outside the cafe) and the incongruous images are faultlessly captured by Ousama Rawi's crystal-clear cinematography. One can only anticipate Hodges' future films with much pleasure, especially if he continues to employ such striking visual traits as the beautiful, Wellesian tracking shot that follows first a waiter and then Caine from one end of the hotel— through lobbies and hallways —

to the other. If **Pulp** is merely a divertissement, it is a consistently delightful one. *Montague Smith*

LUDWIG

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer release of a Ugo Santalucia production. Producer: Ugo Santalucia. Director: Luchino Visconti. Story and Screenplay: Visconti and Enrico Medioli, in collaboration with Suso Cecchi D'Amico. Director of Photography: Armando Nannuzzi. Cast: Helmut Berger, Romy Schneider, Trevor Howard, Silvana Mangano, Gert Frobe. 1972. Colour. 173 minutes.

For the usual cliche commercial reasons, Luchino Visconti's **Ludwig** has had 40 minutes cut as a condition of United States release. As a result, the film's many excellent qualities are bittersweet and tantalizing in their effect. As good as this rendition is, might it not have been better in full measure?

Ludwig Friedrich Wilhelm, the figure on whom the film is based, reigned as a 19th century ruler of Bavaria, a state now part of Germany. His life was classically tragic in that he was unable to achieve any happiness despite tremendous advantages in the game of life.

That he was born onto a pinnacle of wealth, power and prestige availed the king naught. His true desires, the transcendental satisfactions of love, friendship and cultural delights, were never even minimally fulfilled. As the callousness and greed of his court raged against his humanitarian impulses, he retreated into madness.

In his later years, Ludwig began sublimating his disappointments into lavish, opulent building projects — elegant castles and grandiose rural retreats. The constructions were in every way complementary to the extraordinary natural beauty of the area. They became the legacy distinguishing his rule.

From this scenario, Visconti/MGM have taken full advantage of external settings, capturing their bouquet with delicate, affectionate camerawork and graceful editing. Unfortunately, the dramatic content of the situation has been almost entirely neglected. The mountains, forests and waterways are breathtaking in their splendour, true. The trappings of the Bavarian nobility are equally impressive. The film's visual richness so overwhelms, in fact, that its theatrical deficiencies almost pass unnoticed.

But **Ludwig** is not a genuinely fulfilling experience and the fault lies in the film being little more than a series of pretty images held together by a general familiarity with its characters and circumstances. In his plight, Ludwig is no stranger to history or theatre. In the film, he is surrounded by equally familiar figures: a priest more concerned with the vagaries of duty than ministering to his charge, a steely woman who spurns Ludwig's love, a woman whose love he spurns, an obtuse mother, court figures who curry favor only for material reward.

Montague Smith is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

None of these presences is given much time in the film. Like peripheral phantoms, they appear only long enough to supply a suggestion of the story and then fade into an amorphous background. The audience must fill in the details.

The aesthetic loss is that of plot and character development. The supporting roles have been reduced to virtual cameo appearances on the part of several fine actors. (Though Helmut Berger's lead, it should be noted, is quite good). Despite its visual richness, the film is an empty, steady progression towards an inevitable and acknowledged end. The picture lacks any of the many humanisms which might have moved and delighted audiences.

The fault may lie with Visconti — the humanistic content was possibly never in the film — but it is more likely a side-effect of the 40 minutes of out-takes. But to its credit, the American version of **Ludwig** earns the distinction of creating a desire for more. *Hal Aigner*

HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

A Universal release of a Malpaso Company production. Producer: Robert Daley. Director: Clint Eastwood. Screenplay: Ernest Tidyman. Photography: Bruce Surtees, Art Direction: Henry Bumstead. Music: Dee Barton. Cast: Clint Eastwood, Verna Bloom, Mariana Hill, Mitchell Ryan, Jack Ging, Stefan Gierasch, Ted Hartley. Panavision. Technicolor. 1973. 105 minutes.

High Plains Drifter opens with a magnificent wide-screen telephoto shot of a desert landscape where shimmering waves of heated air create a mirage from which a figure on horseback gradually emerges. As the credit sequence proceeds, we follow the high plains drifter as he makes his way toward Lago, passing through the town's graveyard on his way. To this point the soundtrack has been a rather subdued variation on a theme for a Leone western. Then, as the stranger rides through the town, only the sound of his horse is audible, while townspeople stare from doorways, balconies and shop windows. Entering the saloon, the stranger orders a beer and a bottle of whiskey while an assortment of sinister faces size him up from the opposite end of the bar, then proceed to bait and taunt him. The drifter merely picks up his bottle and leaves to take a shave and a bath. The nervous barber is about to apply his razor with a shaky hand when a trio of toughs from the bar arrive intending to finish what they started. Suddenly the tension which has been building up is released in a gunfight at point blank range which leaves three corpses strewn at the stranger's feet. Groups of curious townspeople with noses for freshly spilled blood gather to look over the carnage.

There is a definite flavor of Leone in this opening sequence: the solitary figure on horseback emerging from the landscape; the full screen close-ups of faces; the interplay of music, natural sound and silence to create suspense; the restless camera moving to show us the action from as many viewpoints as possible. Yet the pacing is more economical: shots are not held nearly as long and attention is not lavished on every detail in the grand Leone manner. Perhaps he's added a dash of Siegel to cut the richness of Leone. It is hard to resist looking for the influence of these two, who have directed Eastwood in a total of seven films between them.

But Eastwood is by no means to be written off as merely a derivative director. **Play Misty For Me**, his first feature, was an interesting but uneven film marred by a patch-work style which could accomodate the excess of the lyrical "young-lovers-in-paradise" sequence. **High Plains Drifter** exceeds what one might expect on the basis of Eastwood's first film and establishes him as a talented director who handles his material with assurance and polish.

It happens that the stranger has disposed of Lago's hired protectors on the day before three men who have a score to settle with the town are to be released from prison. When the townspeople offer the stranger anything he wants to protect them, he accepts and promptly begins to turn the social structure upside down. He requires a bigotted storekeeper to give an Indian family free goods, demands that Mordecai, a midget frequently abused and exploited in Lago, be appointed mayor and sheriff and oversees unemployed Mexican carpenters as they dismantle the barn of a prominent citizen. Ultimately the stranger orders the entire town painted red, makes preparations for a huge party, arranges for a "welcome home boys" sign to be put up, and changes the town's name to Hell. The town sits and waits for punishment to be meted out.

Ernest Tidyman's **(The French Connection)** script contributes a great deal to the success of **High Plains Drifter**. The dialogue is earthy and funny, freely mixing coarse epithets and deadpan black humour with the conventional terse exchanges characteristic of the western genre. Many of the situations and themes in **High Plains Drifter** are familiar: the training of the townspeople to defend Lago (eg. **Seven Samurai** and its offspring); an unnamed stranger on a mission of vengeance (**Once Upon a Time in the West**, among others); an anarchic figure who destroys order in a frontier town (eg. **Welcome to Hard Times**). Yet each of these conventions is handled in a slightly unusual or offbeat manner: the stranger doesn't defend the town as they expect him to; he seems to be an impersonal agent of divine or satanic judgment rather than a man with a personal score

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2021

to settle; the frontier town is supported by a corrupt social order and the anarchy which the stranger visits upon Lago establishes social justice.

The photography of Bruce Surtees (**The Beguiled, Dirty Harry**) is superb. Several of his compositions utilize the wide screen for striking effects; the opening and closing sequences with the figure on horseback emerging from, then receding into, a mirage, as well as the released prisoners riding furiously across the desert toward Lago leaving a rising cloud of dust in their wake. However, the most memorable sequences from a visual standpoint are the whipping scenes, when we see the marshal (who had been killed by the trio in turn shot by the Eastwood character) whipped to death in moonlight from two different points of view and, again, when the stranger whips one of the men who participated in the first whipping. Surtees, well protected by padding, photographed the first whipping from the marshal's viewpoint, looking up at his leering executioners while the townspeople's faces are hidden in shadows. Later we see the same scene from Mordecai's viewpoint, another low angle shot from beneath the boardwalk where the faces of the Lago citizenry are visible. Finally we see the stranger from a slightly low angle as he scourges the sinner with the flames of Hell (formerly Lago) raging behind him. The eerie quality of these scenes is intensified by the fact that only the sound of cracking bullwhips is audible.

It would be difficult to single out performances from the relatively unfamiliar cast since they are uniformly effective in rather small roles. Eastwood's western persona as established in the Leone films is maintained in **High Plains Drifter**, and as the stranger he dominates the film. Far more interesting and significant than Eastwood's already familiar presence on the screen is his taste, judgment and control behind the scenes in coordinating this creative effort. As a director, Eastwood should be interesting to watch in the future. Like Altman, he appears to be evolving as a remarkably eclectic director. Having completed a suspense film and a western, he is currently preparing a romantic comedy. When one considers his box office draw as an actor and the commercial successes of his Malpaso Company, Eastwood appears to have a promising and independent career ahead of him as a filmmaker.

Gerald Priesing

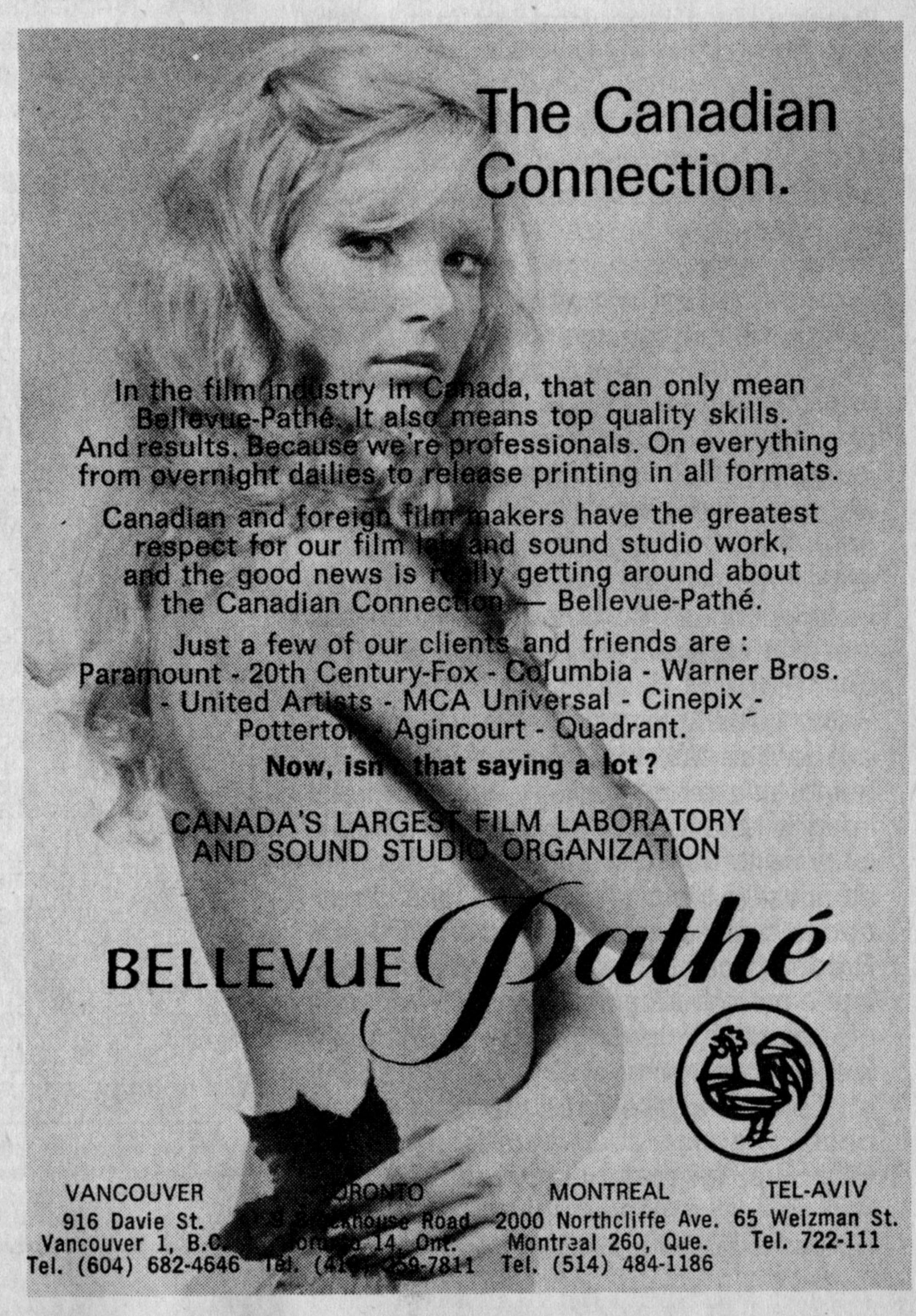
ULZANA'S RAID

Director: Robert Aldrich. Producer: Carter De Haven. Screenplay: Alan Sharp. Editor: Michael Luciano. Photography: Joseph Biroc. Music: Frank DeVol. Art Director: James Vance. Cast: Burt Lancaster, Bruce Davison, Jorge Luke, Richard Jaeckel, Joaquin Martinez, Lloyd Bochner, Karl Swenson, Douglas Watson, Dran Hamilton. A Universal Release. Technicolor. 1972. 103 mins.

"But why didn't they kill the boy?" asks fuzzy-cheeked Bruce Davison, a confused West Point officer after viewing the bloody remnants of an Apache ambush.

We and Davison are confused. We want answers. But Robert Aldrich's film gives no simple answer to the understanding of the Indian. The question of fathoming the Apache has troubled Aldrich since 1954 when he made the film **Apache** starring, ironically, Burt Lancaster as the Indian who declares war on white society. From that film to **Ulzana's Raid** Aldrich has refused to give the simple answers which other directors too often hand us without conviction. There is no simple way to respond to such diverse Aldrich creations as Baby Jane and Blanche, Sister George, Slim Grissom, Lylah Clare or all of the Dirty Dozen. The enigma of these characters and Aldrich's films is that of life. There are no simple answers; people cannot be pigeon-holed. There are differences between everyone which must be recognized and respected. As Kim Darby learned to respect the love of the childish killer Slim (Scott Wilson) in **The Grissom Gang** in spite of his savage brutality, so eventually does Davison begin to respect the equally brutal Apache in **Ulzana's Raid**.

Aldrich does not make the ultimate respect for Ulzana an easy revelation. I doubt, for example, if Indian massacres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and their aftermath have been more vividly, terrifyingly or horribly depicted than in **Ulzana's Raid**. The claustrophobic siege of Karl Swenson from his point of view and the long look at his mutilated body are particularly disturbing. We are also moved by the sergeant (Richard Jaeckel) as he tells the story of his hatred of the Apache for having killed an infant. The power of Aldrich's film, however, is that instead of a growing hatred toward the Apache, we, and Davison, gain a distinct respect for him.

The renegade Indian Ulzana emerges not simply as a figure of brutality and terror but as a consistent and honorable human being with a set of values so radically different from our own that we may never be able to understand them. Ulzana and his raiders are neither to be hated nor understood. They are to be respected. "You might as well hate the wind," says Lancaster at one point.

Like so many of Aldrich's films, **Ulzana's Raid** appears to be one thing at the beginning and becomes something quite different by the end. We are introduced to Ulzana as a murdering monster, a kind of brother to Mulligan's Stalking Moon. In contrast, Davison (best known as Willard) is first seen as the comic innocent umpire of a baseball game. He calls all the pitches wrong because he is distracted by a rider coming from a great distance. The men begin ridiculing his bad calls in one of the few humorous moments of the film. The game breaks up when the rider announces that Ulzana has broken out of the reservation.

At first, Davison, the son of a preacher, sees no problem reconciling God and battle. He welcomes the opportunity to lead the patrol against Ulzana. He knows what is right; there is only one right and for this he is seen by Aldrich as a figure of ridicule. Almost all the touches of humor in the film are at Davison's expense. His initiation comes but it's gradual, like our own. He tries to hold on to his attitudes of Christian salvation. Soon, however, he turns to blind hatred matching that of his sergeant, Richard Jaeckel, when he encounters the massacre victims. Slowly, he begins to respect the Apache, the alien being, through Lancaster, who has no hatred of the Apache, and through an Apache scout who is related to Ulzana.

The film is an initiation; the young man learns as Lancaster says he will, that nothing is certain, there are no absolutes. Chance is a part of life. Things are constantly going wrong in Aldrich films; things that should have worked out. In **Ulzana's Raid**, an accidental signal sends the troop into a premature attack. Davison botches the rescue by blowing a bugle (the bugle is a recurring symbol of false hope in the film) to let the besieged Lancaster know he is coming. The lack of absolutes in **Ulzana's Raid** is underscored in the final shot in which the dying Lancaster is caught in a freeze frame as he rolls a cigarette. Compare it to the unsettling final, intentionally inconclusive freeze frame of Aldrich's **The Legend of Lylah Clare** — the tooth-bared dog in a commercial lunging for his food.

Aldrich films are filled with unsettling, unresolved questions. Who was driving the car, Blanche or Baby Jane? Is Jimmy Stewart a hero or a fool in **The Flight of the Phoenix**? Are the Dirty Dozen heroes or monsters? Is Slim simply a congenital idiot, a monster, or a figure which merits acceptance? Apparent monsters of the first order appear frequently in Aldrich films, but it is to Aldrich's credit that by the end of the film we are left with an unsettled tension about them. Our method of simple categorization of good and evil becomes meaningless. In fact, good and evil appear to have no value. There are only people we accept or do not accept, understand or do not understand. Ulzana, like Slim or Hardy Krueger and Peter Finch in **The Flight of the Phoenix**, is a man committed, and for Aldrich there is great dignity in committment.

Aldrich continues to make the most exciting and action-filled films in Hollywood. At the same time, his films are some of the most disturbing and morally questioning of our time. His is an ability and intelligence often overlooked in a search for more simple answers than those he is willing to give us.

Stuart M. Kaminsky

THE FINISHING TOUCH

Director: Morrie Ruvinsky. Cast: Jace Vander Veene, Pia Shandel, Cece Grandbois, Morrie Ruvinsky and Sylvia Spring.

The action of this Vancouver-made film covers a few weeks in the life of Mark Van Troyan, a young film director, during which time his success and coherence as artist and as human being are seen to disintegrate. He is starting on a feature movie, and trying to make it with his leading actress, Krista (Pia Shandel). His wife Shirley (strongly acted by Cece Grandbois), apparently to recapture his waning attention, takes the radical step of neglecting The Pill; when she announces the ensuing pregnancy to Mark, he throws her out in a frightful tantrum. Shirley goes to their wise, kind friend, Owen (Morrie Ruvinsky himself), and Mark takes up with Krista. Things go badly. Mark is moody and vindictive, an ugly person. His film is getting nowhere. He is tyrannical and arbitrary on set, and it becomes increasingly clear, to us and to his actors, that he has lost all grasp on his script-idea. Shirley sues for divorce — jolly cameo-role for Sylvia Spring as the prostitute hired to appear in the adulterous snapshots — but shortly thereafter Mark finds himself unable to get it up for Krista. In a furious and degrading incident in the studio, he brings her off by hand in front of the camera, to get a shot of her face expressing authentic sexual surrender. The film ends with an obscure suggestion that he has reached the point of suicide.

It's a film worth considering seriously. It's an ambitious work — a term of more respect than "pretentious" — whose director has striven towards a difficult achievement. Nonetheless, serious consideration of the film amounts eventually to formulating one's dissatisfaction. The major objections can be reduced to two: first, the film generates insufficient involvement and belief in Mark to sustain our concern for what is intended to be his "tragedy"; and secondly, the film has no stylistic integrity.

It is notoriously hard, in movies, to establish a creative artist as a person who really works at his imaginative conceptions and his craft, rather than as an ill-tempered eccentric. It would altogether change our response to the stormy, selfish, mean-spirited Mark if we could also see the signs of genuinely creative intelligence or application.

The question of stylistic integrity is not simply the cavil of a purist or a pedant. In dramatising Mark's break-up, **The Finishing Touch** scuttles restlessly from one cinematic convention to another, continually agitating the viewer with busily intrusive editing, trying anything in the effort to bring us into immediate touch with the turmoil of Mark's interior life. So we go from straightforward realism (often low-keyed and truthful) to nightmare to fantasy to quick memory flashbacks to replays-with-variation to expressionistic lap-dissolve sequences — and back again.

A film can arguably give us a more vivid knowledge of another person than we usually have in actual life — but it remains the same *kind* of knowledge, derived from what we see and hear and intuit and presume from that person's perceptible existence as an Other. We cannot experience, we can only guess and imagine what another person perceives, dreams, remembers. We, in fact, identify with a screen character far more strongly when we are led to *imagine* what must be going on inside his head, than when we are shown explicitly. What we imagine for him we inevitably identify with, since we are investing in him experience of our own; on the other hand, what is directly shown to us can only alienate, because it is not a product of our own sensibility, but an artificial concoction.

Godard's **Weekend** is a film which scrambles together the various cinematic conventions by which we usually come to terms with the events on the screen. But the difference is that, whereas Godard lifts us right into a world where the conventions about what can and cannot be expected are in suspension, Ruvinsky shunts us uneasily between a recognizably 'normal' world and a set of local disturbances, intended to be his protagonist's anguish.

Bob Fothergill

ARCHIVE 2021

MOVIES AT A GLANCE

by Susan Rice

Tired of plot resumés? Weary from the auteur theory? Need a rest from a responsible, academic approach to movies? Welcome. **Movies At a Glance** is a carefree, spotty, capricious approach to new releases. The Fast Food School of Film Criticism features tasty morsels of film information that can be ingested on the run.

L'Amour (Dir: Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey. Starring: Michael Sklar, Donna Jordan, Jane Forth and Max Delys.) The slicker Warhol/Morrissey films become the more they resemble soft-core pornography of the '50s. This homosexual frolic is an admixture of egomania and self-contempt. The lovemaking, such as it is, is superficially heterosexual. The men, such as they are, wear their underpants to bed. Breasts, however, are very much in evidence. These are the only parts of the anatomy of Donna Jordan and Jane Forth that are not thoroughly grotesque. The film is nominally set in Paris. It is immensely dull.

Cannibal Girls (Dir: Ivan Reitman. Stars: Euegene Levy, Andrea Martin, Ronald Ulrich.) Inasmuch as this is a Canadian production, it will probably receive the attention it deserves in some other part of this publication. Name values are the only thing that will spare this contrived horror story from anonymity. It is well shot, and Mr. Levy and Ms. Martin do some nice improvisatory acting. The most engaging aspect of the film is a buzzer device that warns the audience of impending gore, and chimes that signal us to remove our cowardly hands from our eyes. This intrusion is so utterly inappropriate as to be engaging. In general, the film bites off less than it can chew.

The Devil and Miss Jones. (Dir: Gerald Damiano. Stars: Genitalia.) Outgrossing **Deep Throat** in New York City. Ms. Jones, a virgin suicide, makes a pact with the devil and is compelled to taste of every conceivable pleasure excepting the missionary position. No orifice is left unprobed. Ms. Jones has a special penchant for snakes and fruit (in all senses of the word). I don't want to be a prude, but . . . .

Love and Pain and the Whole Damn Thing (Dir: Alan Pakula. Stars: Maggie

A 16mm Booker's Guide to Sources of Films Mentioned in This Issue.

Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein. Canada: Visual Consultants, 72 Carlton St., Toronto 2. USA: Universal 16, 445 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.
Alfie. Canada: Paramount Film Services Ltd., 1 Yonge St., Toronto. USA: Films Inc., 1144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill. 60091
All About Eve. Twentieth Century-Fox, 1345 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019
American Revolution II. Vision Quest, 325 W. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10024
Asylum. Cinerama Releasing Corp., 1345 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019
August and July. Crawley Films Ltd., P.O. Box 580, Station F, Toronto M4Y 2L8
Avanti! United Artists, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019
Barefoot in the Park. Canada: Paramount. USA: Films Inc.
The Birth of a Nation. Canada: Peerless Films Ltd., 1070 Bleury St., Montreal. USA: Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10019
Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice. Columbia Cinematheque, 711 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022
Born Free. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: Columbia Cinematheque
Breathing Together. Canada: New Cinema Enterprises, 774½ Yonge St., Toronto M4Y 2B6. USA: New Line Cinema, 121 University Pl., New York, N.Y. 10003
Bride of Frankenstein. Canada: Cinemacraft 16, 12456 rue de Serres, Montreal 9. USA: Universal 16.
The Bridge on the River Kwai. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon, 34 MacQuesten Parkway South, Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10550
Casablanca. United Artists 16, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019
Champion. Canada: Astral Films, 224 Davenport Rd., Toronto. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon
Chandler. M.G.M., 10202 West Washington Blvd., Culver City, Calif.
Charlotte's Web. Paramount Pictures, 1 Gulf & Western Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10023
Citizen Kane. Canada: Astral. USA: Janus Films, 745 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022
Class of '44. Canada: Warner Bros., 70 Carlton St., Toronto. USA: Warner Brothers, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91505
The Clay Pigeon. M.G.M.
A Clockwork Orange. Warner Bros.
The Clowns. Films Inc.
Coming Apart. New Line Cinema.
Countess Dracula. Twentieth Century-Fox.
Cries and Whispers. New World Pictures.
The Curse of Frankenstein. Canada: BelleVue Film Distributors Ltd., 277 Victoria St., Toronto. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Cyrano de Bergerac. Canada: Sovereign Films, 8448 St. Lawrence, Montreal. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Dakota. Films Inc.
Deep End. Paramount.
Deep Throat. Gerard Damiano Productions, New York.
Doctor Jekyll and Sister Hyde. Canada: Astral. USA: American International Pictures, 9033 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211
Dracula A.D. 1972. Warner Bros.
Duck, You Sucker! United Artists.
Easy Rider. Columbia.
Ecstacy. Canada: Carreau Film Collection, 5355 Earnscliffe Ave., Montreal 248. USA: Contemporary Films / McGraw Hill, Princeton Rd., Hightstown, N.J. 08520
El Dorado. Canada: Paramount. USA: Films Inc.
Emitai. Canada: Cinema Images, 221 Victoria St., Toronto 205. USA: New Yorker Films, 43 West 61st St., New York, N.Y. 10023
Fellini Roma. United Artists 16
A Fistful of Dollars. United Artists 16.
Five Fingers of Death. Warner Bros.
Foolish Wives. Canada: Canadian Film Institute, 1762 Carling Ave., Ottawa 13. USA: Radim Films /Film Images, 17 W. 60th St., New York, N.Y. 10023
For a Few Dollars More. United Artists 16.
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Canada: MGM, 340 Victoria St., Toronto 2. USA: Films Inc.
Frankenstein. Universal 16.
Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed. National Film Service, 14 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, N.C. 27602
Frenzy. Universal.
Get Carter. MGM.
Get Yourself a College Girl. Films Inc.
Godspell. Columbia.
The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. United Artists 16.
Greed. Films, Inc.
La Guerre est finie. MacMillan Audio Brandon.
The Guns of Navarone. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Hands of the Ripper. Universal 16.
The Heartbreak Kid. Twentieth Century-Fox.
High Noon. Ivy Films, 165 West 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10036
High School. OSTI, 264 Third St., Cambridge, Mass. 02140
Home of the Brave. MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Horror of Dracula. Universal 16.
In the Year of the Pig. Contemporary Films/McGraw Hill.
Intimate Lighting. Canada: Art Films Inc., 4669 St. Denis, Montreal 34. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Invisible Man. Universal 16.
The Ipcress File. Universal 16.
Jane Eyre. Hurlock Cine World. 13 Arcadian Rd., Old Greenwich, Conn. 06870 and Films Inc.
The Key. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA; MacMillan Audio Brandon.
The Last Laugh. Canada: Cinepix, 8275 Mayrand, Montreal. USA: Janus and Radim.
The Last of the Red Hot Lovers. Paramount.
The Last Picture Show. Columbia.
The Last Tango in Paris. United Artists.
Living Free. Columbia.
Lonely Are the Brave. Universal 16.
Lost Horizon. Columbia.
Lovers and Other Strangers. Cinerama.
Ludwig. M.G.M.
MacKenna's Gold. MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Made For Each Other. Twentieth Century-Fox.
Mandabi. New Yorker Films.
The Marriage Circle. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
A Married Couple. Aquarius Releasing Inc., 229 West 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019
Medium Cool. Films Inc.
The Men. Canada: Sovereign. USA: Twyman Films, 329 Salem Ave., Dayton, Ohio 45401
Mon Oncle Antoine. Canada: International Tele-Film, 221 Victoria St., Toronto 205. USA: Cinema Five, 595 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022
The Murder of Fred Hampton. Video Tape Network, 115 E. 62nd St., New York, N.Y. 10021
Neon Palace. Topsoil Films Ltd., 834 Yonge St., Toronto.
Once Upon a Time in the West. Films Inc.
The Only Thing You Know. Canadian Film-makers Distribution Centre, Rm. 2041, 341 Bloor St., Toronto 181.
Paint Your Wagon. Paramount.
Pandora's Box. Janus.
Paris nous appartient. Canada: Faroun Films, 136 St. Paul E., Montreal 127. USA: Janus.
The Passion of Joan of Arc. Canada: J.A. Lapointe Film Distributors, 4651 St. Denis, Montreal. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Persona. United Artists 16.
Phantom of the Opera. Canada: BelleVue. USA: Universal 16.
Play It Again, Sam. Paramount.
Potemkin. Canada: Astral. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Pulp. United Artists.
The Revenge of Frankenstein. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Rhythm Parade. The Film Center, 915 12th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005
Rio Lobo. National General, One Carthay Plaza, Los Angeles, Calif. 90048
Salesman. Harold Mayer Productions, 155 W. 72nd St., New York, N.Y. 10023
Satyricon. United Artists 16.
Slither. MGM
So This is New York. Ivy.
Sound Off. Institutional Cinema Service, 915 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10010.
Sous les toits de Paris. MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Spooks Run Wild. United Entertainment Inc., 1124 S. Cheyenne, Tulsa, Ok. 74119
La Strada. MacMillan Audio Brandon.
The Thief Who Came to Dinner. Warner Bros.
Traffic. Columbia.
Trash. Cinema Five.
The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll (House of Fright). Canada: Astral. USA: American International Pictures.
Two People. Universal.
The Victors. Canada: Visual Consultants. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Wattstax. Columbia.
White Nights. Astral.
The Wild Bunch. Warner Bros.
The Wizard of Oz. Canada: Canadian Federation of Film Societies, 1762 Carling Ave., Ottawa 13. USA: Films Inc.
A Woman of Paris. Available for viewing only by special appointment with John Kuiper, Film Dept., Library of Congress, Washington.
Women in Love. United Artists 16.
Yojimbo. Canada: Art Films, Inc. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon and Janus.
Young Man with a Horn. Canada: Warner Bros. USA: MacMillan Audio Brandon.
Young Winston. Columbia.
Zambizanga: New Yorker Films.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite. (Vol. 3, No. 8). Cinema Images, Toronto.
Fig Leaves. (Vol. 3, No. 8). Cinema Images.
My Darling Clementine. (Vol. 3, No. 8). Cinema Images.
Three Lives. (Vol. 3, No. 8). George Ritter Films, Ltd., Toronto.

2021

Smith, Timothy Bottoms.) If you like Alan Pakula (**The Sterile Cuckoo, Klute**), I think you'll like at least the first half of this film. Smith and Bottoms play two of life's losers who fall in love while touring Spain. He is a bumbling asthmatic; she is suffering from some unspecified falling down and dropping things disease which, we discover, is FATAL. This **Dark Victory** touch is not exactly light and it is shocking to think that screenwriter Alvin Sargent would resort to such a melodramatic device in 1973. The movie goes haywire in the last half hour and that is almost enough to cancel out the sensitivity of the rest of the film . . . but not quite. Sappy, sentimental movies that work are rare, and if you go for that kind of thing, as I do, you ought to see this one.

The Nelson Affair (Dir: James Cellan Jones. Stars: Glenda Jackson, Peter Finch.) Ripped from the pages of history (as they say), this puny pageant re-unites that handsome couple from **Sunday, Bloody Sunday** — as though this story of Lord Nelson's scandalous love affair with the outrageous Lady Hamilton could serve as an antidote/sequel to the thwarted couplings in **Sunday**. Jackson and Finch endow the film with some life. Aside from volumes of high sounding talk, the most remarkable aspect of **The Nelson Affair** is that it features a climactic sea battle fought entirely within the confines of a sound stage.

Paper Moon (Dir: Peter Bogdanovich. Stars: Ryan O'Neal, Tatum O'Neal, Madeline Kahn.) Bogdanovich has had the moxie to shoot another movie in black and white, and this time he dotes on the atmosphere and artifacts of the '30s. O'Neal and his nine-year-old daughter play a couple of cons in this period piece by scenarist Alvin Sargent. The film is a strange cross between **Last Picture Show** and **What's Up Doc?** — the setting is grimly realistic, the tone often crosses over into slapstick. The most compelling aspect of the film is also a freakish one — and that is the performance of Tatum O'Neal, whose pinched face suggests the canniness and feistiness of a forty-year-old midget. Bogdanovich plays down the potential sentimentality of the reluctant partnership, and I found this restraint admirable but unsatisfying. The movie, for all its craft and care is not very moving.

Slither (Dir: Howard Zieff. Stars: James Caan, Peter Boyle, Sally Kellerman, Louise Lasser.) A lot of reviews of this film are out and I think they have been unfair to the movie and, more importantly, to audiences who will really enjoy it. Zieff has been in for a lot of undeserved flack because he formerly directed tv commercials, and it appears to be very chic to say that **Slither** is just an extended Alka Seltzer spot, when it's really much more. Granted, the film ultimately disappoints the audience it has so sweetly aroused with a cockamamy finish, but getting there is unusual fun. The film is a triumph of characterization and dialogue, and it does a neat job of dramatizing the kind of absurdity that has come to characterize contemporary living. Also, it's genuinely funny. Don't listen to them; listen to me.

Soylent Green (Dir: Richard Fleisher. Stars: Charlton Heston, Edward G. Robinson.) A futuristic parable concerning the ultimate in recycling human foodstuffs. This film telegraphs its startling revelation about half-way through. The women in the film are known as "The Furniture Girls." Which is the only thing that Charlton Heston, a piece of wood, could relate to in a meaningful way. Silly.

A Touch of Class (Dir: Melvin Frank. Stars: George Segal, Glenda Jackson.) A romantic comedy and mis-match. Segal is miscast as a suave, American businessman seeking some extra-marital action. Jackson is his tough-talking, sophisticated and somewhat overwhelming prey. They venture to Spain for an idyllic tryst and — oh boy — the zany, wacky misadventures that ensue. The sleazy premise is accompanied by the usual disavowing bitter-sweet ending. The story has all the unlikely coincidences and cheeky dialogue to qualify it as arrested-'40s moviemaking. Class with an iron fist.

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A FILM MAKER'S COLUMN

by Lenny Lipton

A

Super-8 Sync Pulse

In last issue's column I threatened to write more about the subject of super-8 sound, but when I wrote those words I had forgotten that *Take One* appears every other month. Now it seems like too much time has passed to continue with the subject, but it is interesting to note that since the column was written more equipment using full coat super-8 stock has appeared.

A great deal of work has gone into devices for syncing image and sound, such as the pilot system of sync. It's the standard professional method, using a narrow track down the middle of quarter-inch tape. But it would never have been developed if stereo recorders with stacked heads had been available two decades ago. Now we are stuck with what, in the light of today's technology, is an awkward system.

But there's no reason for super-8 to be tied to the pilot system, when any stereo machine can use it's second track to record either sync information or another sound channel. Moreover, tape recorders using perforated tape or thicker-base (that's the only difference) mag film can be simply referenced to the speed of the camera.

What's required is an optical or mechanical sensing system, which looks at the perforations on the tape or mag film, and a one-per-frame pulse originating in the camera. The camera pulse is then compared to the recorder pulse, and either camera or recorder speed can be controlled. For that matter, both camera and recorder could be crystal controlled, so that no connecting cables are needed.

Most tape recorders of any quality at all can hold speed to within .2% (at 7½ ips), which is a small variation indeed, adequate for umbilical cord sync. Most cameras one is likely to use with such a system — super-8 Beaulieus, or Nizos and so on — can't do much better than 2 or 3%, so it makes sense for the recorder to control the camera speed.

This was the essence of John Watson's system, originally called the Filmin and now known as Optasound in the States. The latest Optasound units use a thick perforated mag tape, which bridges the gap between tape and mag film.

Low Light is Better Than No Light

I've lately had the pleasure of using Kodak's XL 55 camera with a 9 to 21mm f/1.2 zoom lens. (What a great lens! I wish it focused closer than 6 feet.) It's been interesting to put film through both the Kodak and the Beaulieu. The Kodak machine (there's a new version which operates at 24 fps, in addition to 18 fps) allows for exposure under terribly dim light, down to, say, 6 foot candles, with a film like Ektachrome 160, or even less with GAF's 500 exposure-index black and white film.

Despite the fact that the Beaulieu has a mirror shutter, as opposed to a light-robbing beam splitter as used in the vast majority of super-8 machines, it has a shutter speed of 1/85th second at 24 fps, instead of the more normal 1/50th second. At 24 fps the Kodak machine, which boasts a 230 degree shutter, has a speed of 1/40th second. Clearly, it admits twice

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Lenny Lipton is the author of Independent Filmmaking. *He was the film columnist for* The Berkeley Barb *during its first four years of publication. He has made 18 films, and wrote "Puff, the Magic Dragon." He is far out.*

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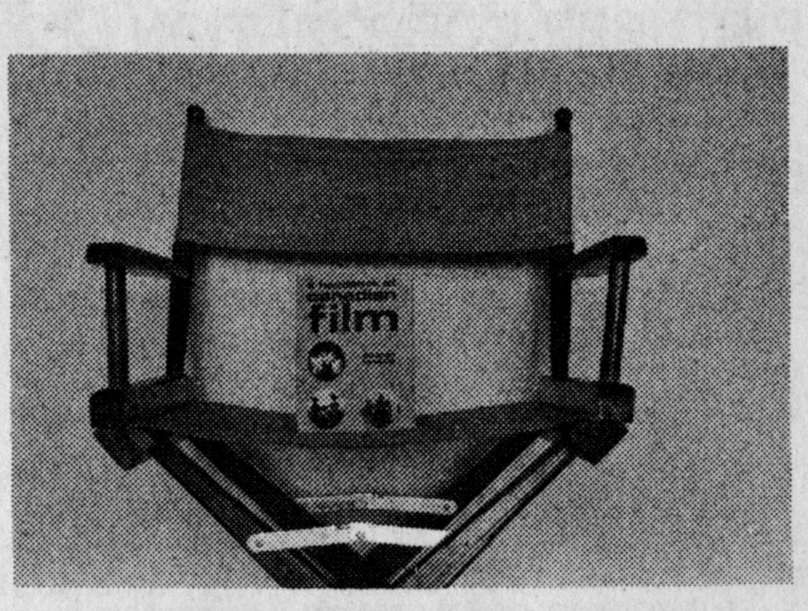

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the light that the Beaulieu does.

It is no mean achievement for Kodak to produce such a superb — and it is superb — movement and sell it in a good quality camera for about $190. Designers of the world take note: The advantages of slow shutters for movie cameras are very great, and your expensive hardware would be easier to use in low light with this feature.

A Universal Film

Being able to film under all levels of illumination with one film on hand would be a tremendous advantage to any filmmaker. Naturally this calls for a good quality emulsion of high speed, and a camera that has a wide range of exposure control so that the film can be used in sunlight and in dim lighting conditions as well.

Eastman has taken one step closer with its E 160 film. E 160 is a drop faster than its companion tungsten-balanced Ektachrome 7242 (with an exposure index of 125), and since 7242 is also available in super-8 cartridges, I could compare the two. The verdict: Eastman should immediately withdraw 7242 in both 16 and super-8, and replace it with E 160. E 160 is finer grained, looks sharper, has superior color and color balance, is less liable to processing errors, and processing by non-Kodak labs is far cheaper.

The film uses a new process designed for photo-finishers, who cannot handle complexities, and this process must be a vast improvement to get so much out of what sources at Eastman assert is essentially the same emulsion as 7242. Since the photo-finisher won't touch it, the only place you can depend upon getting your 7242 processed is by Kodak, and they charge $2.85 a roll, and do a truly lousy job. (Kodak should be ashamed of the terrible work done on this film, at least by their Palo Alto facility. The same lab does a good job with Kodachrome, but they have repeatedly succeeded in blotching and scratching my 7242.)

By contrast, the local photofinisher, Berkey, does a splendid job on E 160, and charges a mere $1.29.

Unfortunately, the last batch of E 160 I used produced terrible yellow jaundiced skin tone under tungsten, a no-no for color film if there ever was one. But since this defect has already been noted in print by others, by now Eastman has probably corrected this off-color trouble.

Eastman's also produces an E 40 emulsion, a companion to E 160, which doesn't look very much better than E 160, and it's certainly not what we'd come to expect from the company that can make the fantastically beautiful Kodachrome, which is the same speed. Right now E 40 is on a par with less expensive Dynachrome, which is a fairly good film. So why use E 40? Well, it's a little less grainy than E 160, and it cuts well with E 160. Sadly, E 40 replaces the fine Ektachrome II, formerly available mainly in Canada.

IN THE WORKS

Herewith, as complete and up-to-date as we can make it, a necessarily brief summary of Canadian independent feature-film activity. Productions that have (to the best of our knowledge) received assistance from the Canadian Film Development Corporation are indicated by an asterisk. (Assembled with the help of the Cinémathèque Québécoise.)

The Canadian feature scene continues to be relatively (relative — that is — to last year's prodigious activity) quiet, whether from exhaustion or continued investment uncertainty it seems too early to tell.

Among Montreal-based productions mentioned in earlier issues, the following have now terminated shooting and are in one stage or another of post-production: Gilles Carle's **Les corps célestes*** (a Canadian-French co-production, this picture is to be distributed by Michael Costom's Société Nouvelle de Cinématographie); Pierre Duceppe's **Je t'aime*** (starring Jeanne Moreau and Jean Duceppe); Michel Bouchard's $100,000 super-16 feature, **Blanc Noel**; Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's **On n'engraisse pas les cochons a l'eau clair***; and André Forcier's **Bar Salon***.

Claude Fournier's **Alien Thunder*** (French title: **Le tonnerre rouge**) is now scheduled to open in Montreal (simultaneously in English and French versions) this September 14th. The film stars Donald Sutherland, Jean Duceppe, Francine Racette, Chief Dan George and Kevin McCarthy, and — at a total budget, now, of some $1.5 million — is the most expensive Canadian film ever made.

Also in Montreal, Pierre David's aggressive Les Films Mutuels is now preparing English-language versions of several of their recent successes: Denis Héroux's **Quelques Arpents de Neige***, Jean-Claude Lord's **Les Colombes***, Gilles Carle's **La mort d'un bûcheron*** (selected as the official Canadian entry at this year's Cannes film festival), Raphael Lévy's Canadian-French co-production, **Maggie**, and Héroux's **J'ai mon voyage*** (to be titled **Enuff is Enuff** in its English version). In terms of new production, Les Films Mutuels is co-producing — with Montreal's Potterton Productions — the $400,000 feature **Child Under a Leaf***. This is a love story, written and directed by George Bloomfield, to star Dyan Cannon (of **Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice**) and Donald Pilon, and scheduled to start shooting in June. The same firm is preparing (for August shooting) Jean-Claude Lord's next feature, called **Bingo**, which is presently awaiting a CFDC involvement. Also set to go, once financial arrangements have been finalized, are three other Films Mutuels productions that are to be shot this summer and about which we'll have more details next issue.

Montreal's Harold Greenberg (of Bellevue-Pathé Labs and Astral Communications) has been busy again and, working — with Don Johnston — through a new company called InterContinental Leisure Industries, is putting together a number of feature packages as Executive Producer. First of all, as mentioned last issue, is **Funzy and the Holy Name Society**, a $800,000 comedy directed by, starring and co-written (with Vancouver's Joseph Cavelli) by Ben Gazzara. Al Ruban (who produced **Minnie & Moskowitz**) is producing, and Diane Keaton (late of **Play It Again Sam**) is co-starring in the film, which is scheduled for two weeks of shooting in New York and six weeks in Montreal, starting the first week of June. Greenberg will also be Executive Producing a feature to be written and directed by Canadian Dan Petrie (director of **Raisin in the Sun** and, most recently, **The Neptune Factor***) which will be shot in the Maritimes this fall. Also in the offing are a possible feature by producer Sandy Howard (**A Man Called Horse, The Neptune Factor***) and another film to star Bill Cosby and Robert Culp to be shot in Toronto in July if everyone's schedules can be reconciled. Greenberg is also in the process of repatriating the film version of Roch Carrier's novel, **La Guerre, Yes Sir** to Canada (possibly with Denis Héroux to direct), putting together (with Potterton Productions) a 90-minute tv film — hopefully to serve as the pilot for a series — called **Paranurses**, and working on the financing of two John Kemeny productions: the $600,000 film version of Mordecai Richler's **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*** (to be directed by Canadian Ted Kotcheff, whose credits include **Outback**), and a thriller called **The Captors**.

In Toronto, producer Jim MacCammon is finishing-up (probably for fall release) his 35mm Panavision production of **Race Home to Die**, a dramatic feature built around auto racing that stars Canadians Neil Munro and Bobby Dermer. Also in Toronto, Jack Cunningham has now completed shooting on **Peep***, with David Cronenberg (**Stereo**) as Director of Photography, and Morley Markson is scheduled to start shooting — this June — on **Killing Time**, a 16mm feature he has written himself.

And in Calgary, Chief Mountain Studios has announced that they are going ahead with production of a $300,000 feature based on the life of the Alberta black cowboy, John Ware.

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Class of '44 (dir. Paul Bogart): Combining an enormous amount of cheek-as-humour with heavy doses of masculine romance renders this film a most pleasant and enjoyable drama. The technical qualities are admittedly conventional but extremely well handled. **(★★★)**

Charlotte's Web (dirs: Charles A. Nichols and Iwao Takamoto): (A confession in brief: The Aigner half of this Beat team is a sucker for animations.) Despite the opening sequences almost drowning in sentimentality, this movie is an extended delight glowing with the tender simplicities which we all wish could be carried into adulthood. The rat's fantasies are especially fine. **(★★★)**

Wattstax (dir. Mel Stuart): A rhythm and blues festival film which uses this particular strain of music as a vehicle for the sociological exploration of Watts, California, ten years after the riot. With lots of funny commentary from Richard Pryor, it's pretty good though the style of cutting away from entertainers before they complete their numbers becomes irritating. **(★★½)**

Asylum (dir. George Roy Baker): Several notches above the run of the mill, this British horror tetralogy is sparked by splendid acting (especially Peter Cushing in his all-too-brief appearance), neatly understated direction and a sharp-edged, hit-and-run script by Robert Bloch. It's all rather predictable but classier than one might expect. **(★★½)**

Slither (dir. Howard Zieff): If the script had in any way approached the competence and skill of the cast, this crime adventure comedy would have been a winner. As it stands, however, the film only manages to place, and that only because most other current releases are so far behind. **(★★)**

5 Fingers of Death (dir. Cheng Chang Ho): A smashing success founded on successful smashing. This is the first (CRUNCH!) of a popular wave (BASH!) of Chinese martial arts exploitation flicks (WHAP!) to make it to our shores. Since audience response has been overwhelming, it won't be the last. **(★½)**

The Thief Who Came To Dinner (dir. Bud Yorkin): Ryan O'Neal, as the handsome jewel filcher, and Jacqueline Bisset, as his pretty accomplice, steal about two hours of precious time for which there is an infinity of better diversions. **(★½)**

Chandler (dir. Paul Magwood): OK, detective movies have more than a touch of existential absurdity, that's one of the reasons they're fun. But this heavy-handed attempt to cross **Big Sleep** with **Last Year At Marienbad** falls flat on its existential ass. Warren Oates does so well with the dreadful dialogue that one aches to see him playing Marlow in a decent movie. A dismal failure. **(★)**

Godspell (dir. David Greene): A miracle! John the Baptist, the patron saint of advance men, turns into Judas before this movie ends. Unfortunately, since the magician is God, this amounts to a mere parlor trick on His part and is hardly worth the wait, considering it occurs near the end of an awfully trite film. **(★)**

Two People (dir. Robert Wise): They had 36 hours to share a love of a lifetime. Audiences have about two hours to get up and leave, the sooner the better. **(★)**

Lost Horizon (dir. Charles Jarrott): In ten years, this will probably be looked back upon as a must-see instance of kitsch and camp. See fine acting talent destroyed! Hear song lyrics banal and obtuse beyond imagination! Gasp in lethargy! But many thanks for Robert Surtees's splendid camerawork, the only oasis in this cinematic desert. **( )**

LETTER FROM OUAGA-DOUGOU

To the east is Niger, to the west and north are Mali and the Sahara, to the south are the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Dahomey. This is Upper-Volta, one of the most densely populated countries in Africa (5,500,000 people) and also one of the most under-developed countries in the World (Gross National Product $60 per inhabitant, placing Upper-Volta far behind countries like Nepal, Zaire, Haiti, Laos, and even Mauritania). The Mossis (35 per cent of the total population), Gourounsis, Lobis, Bobos, Dioulas, Peuhls and Touaregs are the various tribes forming the ethnic background of the country. In the centre is the capital city, Ouagadougou (pop. 150,000), where since 1969, the FESPACO is held: Festival PanAfricain du Cinema de Ouagadougou. Six filmmakers from Senegal, Mali, the Ivory Coast, and Niger attended the first Festival in '69. For this fourth event in '73 more than 30 filmmakers from 23 different African countries met for ten days under the hot sun of central Africa.

Since 1969, few foreigners have attended the annual Festival. And it's unfortunate. On the other hand, it gives the Fédération PanAfricaine des

Cinéastes (FEPACI) ample time and opportunity to meet and to discuss the various problems confronting African films. According to Ababacar Samb, secretary general of FEPACI: "Ouagadougou and Carthage are African platforms where African problems on the social, political, and cultural level of our cinemas can be debated. FEPACI is directly involved in the promotion of this Festival. It's our thing in a way. And we are determined to give it everything to assure its continuity. Here we can meet and discuss our problems, we can even get very aggressive about certain aspects of the question, and we consider this aggression necessary to find a solution. Two large French corporations, SECMA and COMACICO, monopolize the entire distribution sector of films in West Africa. In that they are abiding by rules dictated by the M.P.A.A.'s bosses. Since its founding in Algiers in 1969, FEPACI has constantly denounced this monopoly, and will continue to do so until our governments take the necessary steps to protect African films."

Paradoxically it was this country, Upper-Volta, one of the poorest in Africa, which in 1970 took the first step forward by nationalizing its cinemas. The Societé Nationale Voltaique de Cinéma (SONAVOCI) thus controls the eight cinemas in its territory (two in Ouaga, three in Bobo-Dioulasso, and one each in Ouhigouya, Koudougou, and Banfora). Although SONAVOCI was forced in the end to sign a programming contract with the two corporations, it has also found other suppliers. Algeria, for one, has given ten feature films to the people of Upper-Volta for distribution by SONAVOCI. Now other countries like Guinea (and two other countries in the near future) will join Algeria, Egypt, Lybia, and Sudan in the fight to dismantle this colonial monopoly. On the occasion of this fourth FESPACO, the filmmakers, members of FEPACI who own commercial and non-commercial rights to their own films, have *given* their films to SONAVOCI for distribution. A beautiful gesture of solidarity with a small country which dared to stand up to the imperialists of world distribution.

The Voltaic people were indeed grateful, and demonstrated this by attending "en masse" the showings of FESPACO '73. In Ougadougou the public is now more aware of and more concerned with African films. This year part of FESPACO was held in Bobo-Dioulasso (pop. 80,000), economic capital of the country. It was the second year that the Festival moved for three days to this very busy city some 210 miles to the south and six and one half hours by train from Ouagadougou. Again, it was the occasion for the lively population to see a type of film different from those which it usually sees. Commercial cinema rarely has such sold-out audiences. And it was particularly significant to see the people of Bobo participating to the fullest in the event. It was also rewarding to the filmmakers who came to Bobo even though some of their films were at times highly contested. Ababacar Samb was strongly stimulated by this participation when he commented: "Our people are alienated by Western cinema. Our films belong to a culture, a rhythm, even a language, which colonialism and imperialism have tried to shut out for ever. It is only positive that the audiences react the way they do. It means that they are judging, that they are taking part, becoming conscious of their own culture. We are sick of being 'exhibited' in so many foreign film festivals," he continues, "tired of being given a pat on the back, of talking into white microphones, of speaking in white papers, while our films are rotting away on the shelves of so many distributors both in Africa and abroad."

Let us hope that the films which were awarded prizes at Ouagadougou will not undergo the same fate. The continued existence of filmmaking for Africans has to rely right now on foreign distribution. And the Carthage and Ougadougou festivals, although only four months apart, revealed a sufficient number of good films to prove that African cinema has come of age.

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Les milles et une mains (A Thousand and One Hands) by Souhel Ben Barka from Morocco has at last been recognized by the jury of FESPACO. Ignored completely at Carthage, it came from behind to win the Grand Prize of this fourth FESPACO. Although a bit weak dramatically (with Mimsy Farmer in a key part which she literally boycotted) the film takes its fullest meaning in its documentary aspect, which shows the daily actions of the Moroccan carpet craftsmen and women. But behind this documentary-fiction juxtaposition lies the courage of Ben Barka in his denunciation of the feudal conditions in which these people are kept by the ruling bourgeoisie.

A film which delighted the audience at both the Ouaga and Bobo showings is **Seitane** by Ournarou Ganda of Niger. This tale of a dishonoured "Marabou" is by far Ganda's best film to date (he also made **Wazzou Polygame**, a farce on polygamy). Unfortunately because Ganda had won the grand prize last year his film was ignored by almost all the juries at Ouagadougou. He finally ended up with the FIPRESCI Prize, given by the international press.

Worth mentioning is Upper-Volta's first feature film **Le Sang des parias (Blood of the Outcasts)** a first film by Dim Mamadou Kolla on the rather acute problem of the outcasts in certain trades — a practice still continued in contemporary Voltaic society.

Two films shown at Carthage were also presented at Ouagadougou but not in competition. One was **Le Charbonnier (The Coal-Man)** by Mohamed Bouamari from Algeria. In spite of its title, the film deals with a subject which is most difficult in to-day's Algeria: that of the emancipation of the Arab woman. In a style at times as rigorous as Jancso's **Les Sans espoir**, Bouamari has made an engaging and engaged film. The other film **Et Demain (And Tomorrow)**, by Brahim Babai of Tunisia tells the story of a young boy who leaves his village to come to Tunis. Although it may look a bit classic in terms of subject matter, **Et Demain** nevertheless deals with an acute problem which is a daily tragedy in Tunisia where the number of young unemployed is rising to catastrophic proportion. Both films received prizes at Carthage '72.

Finally, **Identité** by Pierre Marie Dong of Gabon and **L'accident** by Benoit Ramampy received prizes: the first for its "authenticity," the second in the short film categories, where it took both prizes.

The "eternally" Catholic O.C.I.C. gave its prizes to **Zambizanga** by Sarah Maldoror, a fitting tribute to a pretentious film filled with good intentions but which finally turns out to be an excellent demobilizing tool in the hands of those who control cinema in Africa (who produced it!), and also to the family soap opera, **Abusuan** by Henri Duparc from the Ivory Coast (no pun intended).

We can thus conclude with Ousmane Sembene **(Mandabi, Emitai)**: "... our ultimate aim is to recover what rightfully belongs to us: our screens in the black to show black films. But we don't claim exclusive rights to these screens ... we just wish that our foreign friends would keep some of their 'product' at home!"

It might be a good thing for Canadian cinema to take a lesson from the Africans who have succeeded in building these two events which give them the opportunity to examine and criticize their evolution. It seems to be about time that Canada forget its ideas of grandeur in trying to impress everybody but itself with overgrown participation at Cannes and especially with its poor man's Oscars' affair at the annual "National Etrology-Night." Canada is lagging far behind the most under-developed country in the world in matters of cultural policy in the field of cinema.

André Pâquet

LETTER FROM LONDON, ONTARIO

One weekend in February, culture came to London ... and, what's more, film culture ... and, best yet, Canadian film culture. Excitement amongst the converted, the expectant, and the trendy; there was *almost* a rush for tickets, at the prospect of a whole weekend of "Non-existent Canadian films." "Non-Existent," ran the title, because they have been denied an audience by Canada's distribution system. So here was a weekend of "banned" films, a treasure-trove of illicit Canadiana: not just the much-trumpeted French-Canadian **Mon Oncle Antoine**, but Peter Rowe's **Neon Palace**, Clarke Mackey's **The Only Thing You Know**, and Morley Markson's **Breathing Together**. And that only covers the features — there were 15 shorts, by illustrious Canadian names such as Straiton, Wieland, Rimmer.

At last, I thought, six months after arriving in Canada from England (where a festival of French Canadian films took place just after my departure), I shall find out what Canadian film has to offer, what is going on, and what relationship it bears to activities in other parts of the world. It seemed especially appropriate at a time when everyone is bitching about Canadian quotas in fields of all sorts: not enough Canadian professors in the universities, not enough Canadian films in downtown cinemas (1969: of 669 films commercially exhibited in Canada, ten were Canadian), too much U.S. content in television, newspapers, advertising, and so the moaning goes on — as if it's all the fault of the administrators, the distributors, the people with power. And so, when the Festival of Arts Committee at The University of Western Ontario announced the festival — and it was widely publicized both on campus and off, on TV, radio, and in the press — my instant reaction (after six months of nationalistic brainwashing) was: "At last: what the public (the intelligent public?) really wants."

Or does it? As events turned out, it wanted **Mon Oncle Antoine** — after all, that's trendy, everyone knows that *that's* what they're seeing in New York, and Paris, and the *real* London. So, predictably, there were queues and hassles and crowds and Members of the Faculty, and administrative dignitaries and other Important People, and even some students; enough, anyway, to fill the theatre's 400 seats for three performances. But what happened at the other screenings? Rowe, Mackey, Markson — why weren't there queues for these? Why couldn't a university of 15,000 students, (with reputedly one of the best Canadian literature departments in the country), a town of around a quarter of a million inhabitants, find 800 people to see films by Rowe and Mackey; why could such a city find only 250 people to attend the single screening of Markson's **Breathing Together**? The problem with Canadian cinema is not merely, it seems, a problem of distributors and financiers — it is a problem of a disinterested (hypocritical) public that couldn't get off its ass for the first (and last?) Festival of Canadian Films in London, Ont. The Festival's title — "Non-existent Canadian Films" regrettably, and ironically, proved its own force: unless an audience crawls out of the woodwork (and where else but from the campuses of Canadian universities is it likely to emerge), what likelihood is there for directors of the calibre (potential or actual) of Rowe, Mackey and Markson to find the financial support necessary for them to confirm their quality?

So, apart from the fact that the Festival itself did not break even, perhaps more questions were raised than were solved. It's not merely a question of providing an outlet for the films, it's also a matter of prodding an audience into the theatres. And until that audience manifests itself, there's little point, perhaps, in detailed critical analyses of the films simply because working in a void is not conducive to vital critical debate.

So the really interesting issues that the weekend raised must wait until a future date: issues as to what extent is there a specifically *Canadian* film style. The influence of Godard/the New Wave is sporadically evident in Rowe, for

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Martin Walsh is presently teaching film in the English Department of the University of Western Ontario.

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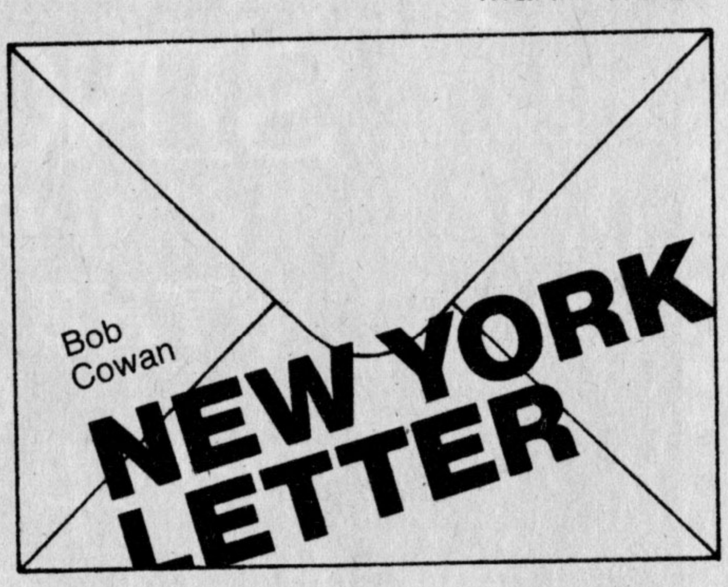
instance, but the cinema-verité/direct interview techniques evolved in the States and at the NFB may be equally significant — yet neither influence dominates to the extent of obscuring a "personal" tone in Rowe's conception and handling. Is he Canadian only in content or is there evidence of a style that relates to other Canadian films? For instance, the concept of the "fictionalized documentary" is a common factor in both **Mon Oncle Antoine** and **The Only Thing You Know**: to what extent does this indicate a stream of influence emanating perhaps from Grierson's dominance of the NFB? These, and related, questions must await investigation at a later date —but in closing, another question: Markson's **Breathing Together** is essentially Canadian only by virtue of its director. The personalities of the film are almost totally American. And yet there was one notable omission from this catalogue of influential personalities, and, interestingly, he is the only *Canadian* with any claim to international significance in this context: Marshall McLuhan. Perhaps more than any other he has been responsible for the "Revolution of the Electric Family" (the film's subtitle), yet there was never a reference to him, let alone a confrontation with him, in the film. Why not? Perhaps a celebration of "Non-existent Canadian Personalities" is next on the festival agenda.

Martin Walsh



I recently returned from San Francisco where I was filmmaker-in-residence at the San Francisco Art Institute. I discovered several things: there is more real filmmaking being done there among new young filmmakers than here; there are more people eager to see these films, and they have the only decent 16mm projection system in the USA. The sound setup consists of 15 speakers mounted in the ceiling with two more on stage, an enormous beaded screen about 11x15 feet whose brightness and size makes one think one is watching 35mm, and a Bauer arc projector that shows up to two and one half hours without a changeover. The focus is the sharpest possible. Canyon Cinema shows films there weekly, and I suggest to any filmmaker who cares enough about his films that the San Francisco Art Institute Theatre is without question technically the best place to show. For the first time anywhere I had a retrospective of nearly all my films, about three and one half hours worth, and it was like seeing them for the first time. I have never seen them under conditions like these, never seen them shining with such luminosity or heard them with such clear sound. New York has a lot of showcases for 16mm, but as far as I'm concerned, one really decent theatre would do more good than all these combined.

I viewed many student films while in San Francisco and was impressed with the creative excellence of a great many of them. I don't have space to cover all of them but I'd like to mention a few.

John McGovern makes multi-coloured multi-imaged blurred and clear coloured stained glass visuals accompanied by imaginative use of layered sound. Curt McDowell's films are mostly sexual parodies, the best being **Pinheads** . . . probably the most outlandish film I have ever seen, a film where religious reformation and sexual hunger are combined in one perfect put-down. Peter Trivelas put together a pseudo-document on a real San Francisco film lab which is known for its shoddy work. Doug Wendt's most successful film, **Time Offed** refers to the classic Claude Rains version of **The Invisible Man** while abstractly pursuing the isolation of man in surroundings of overwhelming indifference. Barbara Linkevitch makes semi-surreal films . . . rhythmical cutting of diverse images . . . women's heavily made up faces, a young boy, an armadillo . . . all combined in an unlikely alliance. John Gruenberger's films are involved with elaborate and highly skilled animation. Larry White's first film is a vaudeville-like conception with God and the devil struggling for the soul of a marijuana convert, followed by revealing interviews with members of the cast.

If there is one weakness in the majority of the films I viewed it is the fact that there is too much emphasis on film as entertainment and not enough emphasis on film as art. Perhaps the fact that most of the filmmakers are still very young has something to do with it.

On returning to New York, the quality of the film scene here was well represented by a showing of (and lecture on) new films by Paul Sharits. At his best, his older films are skilled mechanical exercises, and at worst they are purely academic. They are carefully worked out with a great deal of preparation but the end result of his new work is an absolute zero in visual interest. It has been a long time since I sat through such a display of such pretentiousness. Perhaps these efforts might have been interesting in the context of a Dadaist event but, since this was not the intention, the seriousness with which they were presented became downright silly.

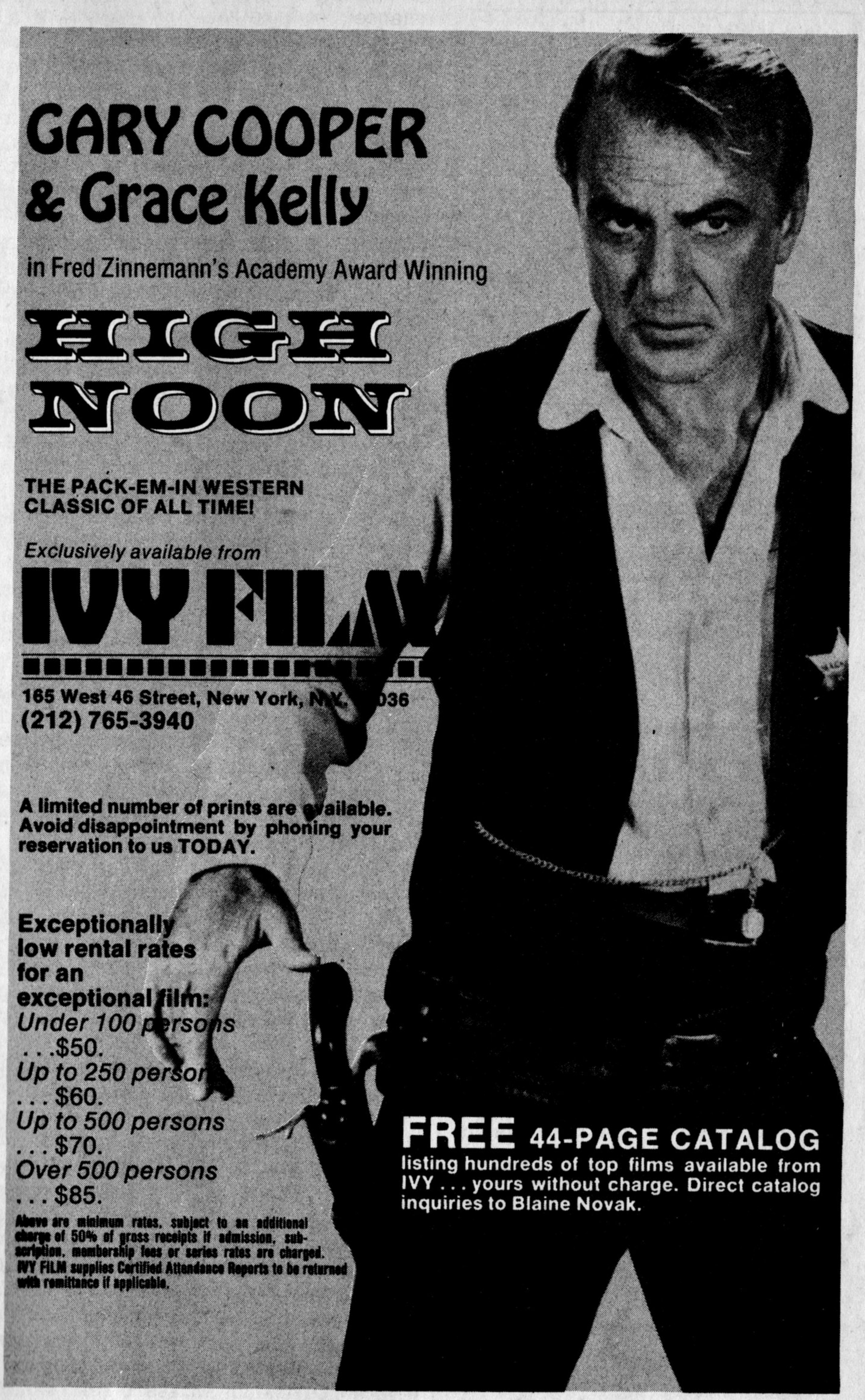
Not to end on a negative note, there is one almost unknown filmmaker in New

*Bob Cowan is a prize-winning Canadian filmmaker (**Soul Freeze**, etc.) now living and working in New York City.*

York who is creating real magic in 8mm. His name is Chris Eckhoff. Shooting in single frame, using 8mm cameras (I say cameras in the plural because using these not-so-rugged cameras in this way soon wears the mechanism out), he explores, caresses, dramatizes and expands the rigid forms of architecture and statuary into pulsating organic forms filled with the energy of life. Stone sentinels, gargoyles and heroes, ancient gods and mythological figures dance, soar, and play out dramatic roles between themselves.

The occasional appearance of real people moving among these swiftly-gliding stone acrobats makes the reality of human movement seem like mere silent movie twitches. Statues with outstretched arms glide and soar through the air like flocks of avenging angels. Regal faces, frozen in stone for ages, communicate with one another, helmeted warriors exchange hats, bosomy stone madonnas whirl like dancing primadonnas. Figures caught in the anguish of some mythological struggle recede into dark hallways and skitter out of sight. Basic forms of triangle, circle and square break from their fixed shapes, melting and sliding into one another like manipulated clay. The architectural structures are seen as a hieroglyphic language of basic forms and parts. The sum total of the various shapes in motion add up to much more than the mere surface functionality and appearance of the buildings themselves. Eckhoff seems to be searching for universal forms that encompass both dream and reality at the same time.

None of Chris Eckhoff's footage has been worked out into a completed form. He is still exploring and probing without coming to conclusions. There is a need to organize this fantastic footage into some kind of disciplined format, but meanwhile the miracles continue and the great stone heroes and heroines dance and soar through endless marble hallways, their stone bodies transformed into something lighter than air.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REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by Herman G. Weinberg

Seventeen "notables" named their best films of the past year for the *Times* and only two chose Jacques Tati's **Traffic** — Penelope Gilliat of *The New Yorker* and Roger Greenspun of the *Times* — which shows what a lack of a sense of humour notables can have and how seriously they take themselves. But good for Ms. Gilliat and Mr. Greenspun — they're on the side of the angels, for Tati's newest — a "*ballet*

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mécanique in yellow and blue" — is a joy and I urge you not to miss it. The world is better for it. Of how many of the current new films can this be said?

Certainly not of Billy Wilder's **Avanti** a bad joke stretched interminably or, alas, **Four Nights of a Dreamer** of Bresson, an attempt to "update" Dostoyevsky's *White Nights à la* the hippies of present-day Paris that isn't believable for a moment. Some pretty shots of the *bateaux mouches* gliding along the Seine at night, lit up like a fairyland, and that's all. Well, and a touch of very discreet nudity of the pretty heroine admiring herself (it seems to be *de rigueur* these days, in order to get financial backing), which has no more to do with what *White Nights* is about than do the pretty *bateaux mouches*. Visconti did it straight, better, and to the hilt 16 years ago, under the title **White Nights**, *sans* any of the pretty nonsense, but with a sense of the ache with which Dostoyevsky had imbued this exquisite little love story. But at least the Italians and French do it. What does Hollywood do? **Avanti**, a heartless "comedy" which doesn't pause for a moment at the breath-taking beauty of the isle of Ischia where it was shot but does pause before the naked behind of Jack Lemmon. In comparison of course, Bresson's film is like a film by Raphael, which is what the best work of Bresson *is* like.

All the rest is books: *King Vidor on Film Making*, about the way it used to be, when he was making them, but, because it's by him, decidedly worthwhile as Hollywood history; Harry Geduld's *Authors on Film*, a fascinating (but *really* fascinating) roundup of what everyone from Tolstoy and Gorky to Shaw, Mencken, Thomas Mann, Brecht, Maugham, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Gide, Faulkner, Dreiser, Dos Passos, Hemingway, etc. had to say, pro and con, about the movies — guaranteed to lower the egos of a lot of film people a couple of notches or more, and make a few, a very few, proud. Another is the late George Amberg's compilation of selected *NY Times* Film Reviews (1913-1970), indispensable reading for the film historian from the fabulous Arno Press' Literature of the Film reprint series, especially for those without access to Arno's massive seven volumes of the complete reviews covering those years. The script of one of the most brilliant films ever made in Hollywood, **All About Eve** by Joseph Mankiewicz, plus an interview with the director, which is as sharp as you'd expect, are all in a volume called *More About All About Eve*; and two volumes have appeared in the splendid and authoritative Cinema d'Aujourd'hui Series of Editions Seghers of Paris, a piercing new one by Freddy Buache of the Cinémathèque Suisse on Erich von Stroheim and an English translation of an older but equally fine book by Maurice Bessy, wit, scholar and new secretary-general of the Cannes Film Festival, on Orson Welles.

Finally there's *Dianying*, an absolutely unique work by Jay Leyda, being a history and analysis of the films and film audiences of mainland China from 1896 to date. No one but Leyda could have done it, no one had access to the material he had (he was there between 1959 and 1964) and no one has the scholarship to organize this vast material (hitherto unknown to the Western world) into a coherent and interesting work even for those who hadn't even realized there *was* such a thing as a "Chinese cinema". It is also an intriguing adventure story of his and others' experiences in China during the years of social and political upheaval which makes the book invaluable as sociological history. Well illustrated, too. The title is Chinese for "electric shadows," which is what movies are called there. All would-be film scholars should study this book to see the meticulousness with which it's done by the acknowledged master of it.

A new film quarterly has made its appearance, *Literature/Film*, issued by the Salisbury State College in Salisbury, Maryland, devoted to the uses to which literature is put on the screen. An original idea for a magazine and worth your investigation.

Two Believe-It-Or-Nots: the Soviets are going to do **Huckleberry Finn** (yes, the Soviets, *not* Hollywood) and Ingmar Bergman is going to do **The Merry Widow**. I eagerly await both, though for different reasons.

BOOKS

The Movie Business: American Film Industry Practice, edited by A. William Bluem and Jason E. Squire. Hastings House, New York. 368 pages. $12.50 cloth; $7.50 paper. In Canada: $12.95 cloth; $7.95 paper.

One of the more paradoxical developments in mass communication studies in recent years has been the unexpected emergence of the film as a subject for serious academic concern. The paradox lies in this intense preoccupation with a medium which has apparently passed its prime as a major entertainment and social force, and is currently fighting to survive in the face of the growing television audience. The logical conclusion to this situation would be a film industry existing solely to provide fare for dissection in university film studies programs.

This book of readings, devoted to an analysis of the business side of the film industry, is a welcome addition in a field where so many recent offerings are not worthy of serious examination. The concentration here is solely on various facets of film industry practice, and the editors have chosen their material wisely in order

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to provide the reader with a necessary background. The book is conveniently divided into sections which indicate the chronological development of a film. Thus the first section is devoted to "Developing the Story and the Screenplay," while the last is an examination of future technical improvements in filmmaking. In-between sections cover financing, film company management, production and direction, distribution and exhibition, and publicity.

The result, while by no means a complete picture of a complex industry, is sufficient to indicate the diverse nature of filmmaking in the '70s. The reader should be warned: this book is definitely not intended to be a "do-it-yourself" text, and does not cover the production of feature films through every minute detail.

The collection is, however, useful in several ways. First, the tone of most of the articles indicates that whatever we in North America may feel, the motion picture industry is still important world-wide. Second, that while the old Hollywood "factory" system has gone forever, no standardized form of film financing or production has taken its place. This in turn means that the film industry is still unsure about its future and is open to experimental ventures in order to survive. It is this uncertainty which has in fact led to the impressive degree of creativity seen on the screen in recent years. However, the old system is not completely dead, and filmmakers continue to ape past successes with disastrous results.

Common through all of the articles is the theme of uncertainty. William Goldman, the highly successful screenwriter of **Butch Cassidy** fame, indicates that the old patterns of publicity are no longer reliable, and even a big name star does not assure success. Banker A. H. Howe, in an informative examination of film financing, suggests that "pictures are not bankable risks." However, Bud Yorkin, the creator of the TV series *All in the Family* believes that "the industry is going to be bigger than ever."

One thing is certain — gone forever are the days when studios, producing films on an assembly line basis, could count on a regular clientele for their product. There are several hints throughout the volume that anti-trust action against the movie industry was as much responsible for its decline as the coming of television. Certainly the legal separation of production from exhibition did have a deleterious impact on the studios.

There is one major omission. Nowhere is the audience's point of view given space, and yet it is the audience which finally passes judgement on the industry's product. The film industry has never really paid much attention to the real needs of its patrons, relying instead on the "instincts" of studio executives. This may have worked in the period prior to television, but more sophisticated methods of audience analysis are required to guide today's more fragmented industry. This collection nevertheless fills part of a gap in currently-available film literature.

Garth S. Jowett

Breaking Through, Selling Out, Droping Dead, by William Bayer. The Macmillan Company. 227 pages. $5.95. In Canada: $6.50.

The Screenwriter Looks at the Screenwriter, by William Froug. The Macmillan Company. 352 pages. $8.95. In Canada: $10.00.

I got a hint of what I most wanted to do in life when my older sisters took me to see **The Wizard of Oz** when I was four years old. Until the wicked witch was safely evaporated into a puff of smoke, I hysterically hid behind a water fountain. At the age of 11, seeing the **Wizard** more calmly, I knew that somebody, somewhere had *made* that motion picture, and if *that* was *work*, it was the kind of work I wanted to do. I wanted to live and work in Oz.

A few years later, attempts to find reading matter about my future profession proved frustrating. Books on films and filmmaking then available — unless one understood French or German — could be counted on one hand. A decade later and more than that number are published every week. Young people who in another era wanted to write novels or plays now dedicate themselves to *the cinema*. Book publishers are aware of this market.

Breaking Through, Selling Out, Dropping Dead, with its cynical title revealing the pessimism of its young author, is geared to would-be directors. In a series of biting and sardonic chapters ("agents: what kind of young man goes into something like this anyway?"; "distributors: of all the bad people in the industry, distributors are among the most wicked and dishonest.") director-author William Bayer sees the young filmmaker as the sensitive artist combating the uncaring, crude and tasteless businessmen who are always in control. Through all the venom, there is much of value in learning that the odds of making it are so against you. For advice to the new young filmmaker, Bayer warns of jobs *not* to accept — most of which are the type young filmmakers most hope to find. He suggests that the best path would be to become a "gopher" (errand boy) for a director of the calibre of Arthur Penn. Mr. Penn can thank Mr. Bayer for his current mail inundation.

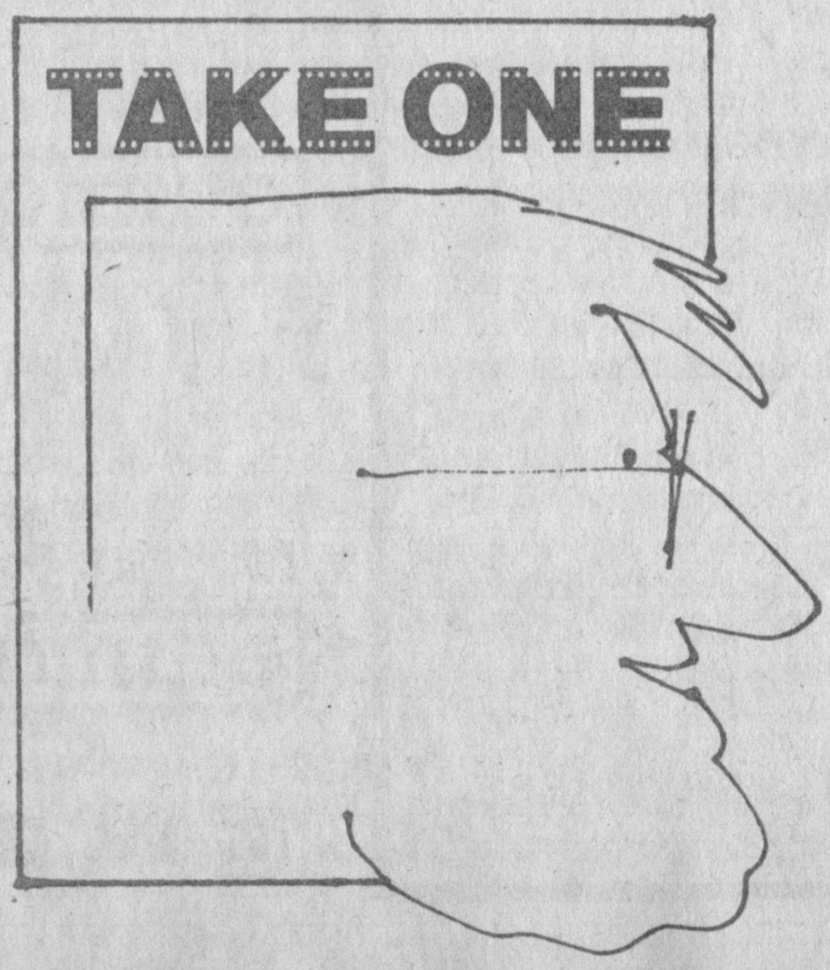
Less invective and more introspection is found in producer William Froug's ***The Screenwriter Looks at the Screenwriter***. Froug interviewed twelve screenwriters currently working in the profession. His choice for inclusion in this volume seems to be based on a chronological-quota-system — two young ones just beginning, several middle-aged at the top, and the rest old-hand veterans. The book is an excellent idea, especially the Paris Review-like excerpt of a page of an actual screenplay from a work-in-progress.

The best chapter in the book is the interview with Walter Brown Newman, detailing a decade of tribulations the scenarist experienced in his attempts to film his original screenplay **Harrow Alley**.

To would-be scenarists, ***Screenwriter*** offers a look into the minds of the men who put the words on paper, but seldom get the recognition. Froug slants his symposium to a theme concerning the excessive and often unwarranted tribute — by critics and audiences — paid to a picture's director, while largely ignoring the work of the writer. For those not wanting to write for the medium, the gossip by film *yentas* herein will be enough to please.

Arthur Axelman

Garth S. Jowett is an assistant professor at Ottawa's Carleton University School of Journalism.



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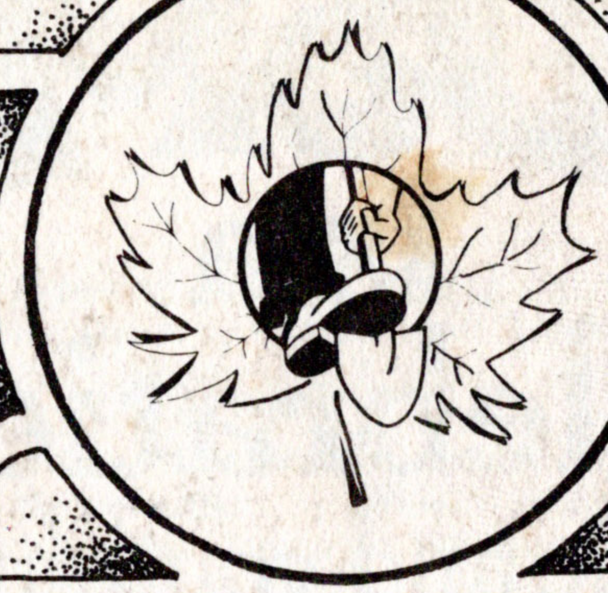

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